

Shadows Of Our Past - a KILL la KILL Season 2 Story

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Embark on a new journey with Ryuko Matoi, set 5 years after KILL la KILL. The Life Fiber Sickness plagues 1/5 of humanity, including Ryuko and Satsuki, but with the arrival of the deadly Ichiro Harime, both sisters and the mysterious revived Nui Harime have to fight back. A story about forgiveness and classic KLLK vibe, tons of action and emotional moments. Time is running...

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Disclaimer

Good day,

my name is DanieD00. I'm writing this story as an attempt to make the best story I ever created, and which is more important, as an attempt to give the story of KILL la KILL a possible satisfying yet reasonable continuation. Chapters will appear in irregular intervals so it's possible that it might take a few weeks until a new chapter comes out, as they first have to be written in the original language. And since each chapter should be interesting and fun to read, this will take a while. The story itself will be a long one as each character should get a nice amount of development and details - some more, some less, depends on their role in the story.

Every once in a while, there will be links to certain music tracks or artworks - the artworks will be made by myself and show you each character so that you as the viewer can imagine them better. Music will be used to intensify battles, quiet and or emotional scenes, and I will try to explain areas as good as possible. I want you viewers to have fun and imagine situations in the story the way I do. I've heard from others already that this works really well and it's a lot of fun, so try it out if you read on the computer or laptop and let me know what you think! :)

A few last words: This story is a bit darker than the original KILL la KILL arc, however it will have emotional and fun moments, some humor too and some scenes will simply be epic without being too overloaded with action. If everything works out the way I want, this is gonna be a great story, trust me. But for now...

... let's start the story with a little meadow during winter.

The Seed

It's been five years since the end of the battle against REVOCS. But even now, life fibers plague the world. One fifth of the world suffers from the Life Fiber Plague. Despite the plague, humanity tries to continue live as before. There is no cure.

What humanity doesn't know, is that their battle has just begun.

Shadows Of Our Past

A KILL la KILL story

Chapter 1: The Seed

Snow is falling. And birds are chirping. The sun breaks through some of the clouds in the sky. Two girls run around, laughing, and steps are audible. The steps slowly become louder.

"I got you!" says Mako smiling towards Ryuko. Ryuko falls with her face into the snow, the hair full of it. She quickly stands up and shakes her head to remove the snow.

"Oh, just you wait, Mako!" Ryuko answers and runs to a tree to get some cover. Mako forms a new snow ball and throws it to Ryuko, but Ryuko dodges and throws a snowball back at her. She hits Makos blue winter jacket. The little woman quickly walks a few steps back and takes cover behinds a little rock, but her head is slightly visible. As fast as she can, she forms a new snow ball and looks around. Ryuko is gone. Confused, she looks around and suddenly gets hit by another snowball on her back.

"Oh?! How did you do that?!" Mako asks amazed and stands up, secretly collecting some snow. Her friend Ryuko walks towards her, mischievously smiling and moving another snowball from her left hand, to her right one and back, until she stands about three meters away from Mako.

"I'm just pretty good, you know?" Ryuko smiles. All of sudden, Mako throws the snowball and hits Ryuko on the upper body. Ryuko staggers back and laughs, then she throws her snowball and hits Mako. Mako falls down into a little hill full of snow. As she stands up, a funny little human form is shaped into the snow hill.

"Wowie! This time, you win! I'm so glad I'm not winning every time!" Mako smiles. Ryuko nods a bit confused, but then just smiles at her friend who grew up a few centimeter.

"Oh yeah, wait for it, Mako, you'll wonder how many times I'm going to win." she laughs. Mako rolls her eyes, smiles and then walks with her friend over a little, snowy meadow, watching the landscape. There is a little forest in the distance, and a small, frozen lake. Both women stand on the hillside, and if they move forward, they probably would just roll down.

"Travelling to Mie was a good idea." Ryuko notices and enjoys the view.

"Yup! We lived in this prefecture once, but you already know that." Mako answers.

"Mhm. Let's go home, I'm hungry." Ryuko grins. Mako nods. Both of them travel back home. For that, they walk over the meadow and then through a little forest with some paths. Some snow falls through the trees and leaves, but thanks to their warm jackets, the cold winter and the snow doesn't play a huge role. In general, the area they live in is quiet and enjoyable, and there aren't many noises either. The village they live in consists of about 1000 citizens, living in an rather huge valley with connection to the highway that leads to huge cities like Ôsaka or Tokyo.

"Senketsu would have loved this area." Ryuko thinks loud.

"Oh he probably would have loved everything more than plain old Hônno-town." Mako comments.

"Yeah, that's true. But at the very least he's never fully gone. Every time I look at the sun, he's there, watching me. Kind of."

"Mhm! He will always watch you! He probably laughed already because you lost three times in a row against me!" Mako laughs.

"Haha, right, Mako! It was only three times, but your streak finds an end now."

"You only won because I pretended to not know where you were." Mako claims all of a sudden, but she obviously is just joking. Ryuko laughs a little bit.

"Did you sister called you this morning?"

"Nah. She's busy. Doing some paper work regarding that stupid REVOCS corporation. But I'll call her later."

"Okay." Mako answers. As they leave the forest, they see some smoke coming up. They arrived at home. When they move to the slight hillside that leads down to the valley the village is located, they quickly realize something is wrong. Fire arises from the buildings, and smoke thickens. People are screaming full of anxiety, running out of the village in panic. Men, women, children and animals flee.

"Oh fuck..." Ryuko says.

"What is happening?!" Mako says confused and looks up to Ryuko.

"Who gives a shit, let's get your family out of there!" Ryuko suggests and runs down to the village with Mako. The closer they come, the warmer it gets, and you can hear walls breaking down. More smoke rises. Suddenly, Mako's pet Guts runs at them, barking. The poor dog looks scared at Mako and Ryuko.

"Guts?! Are you alright?" Mako asks worried. A roof breaks apart. Ryuko pushes Mako and Guts away, and moments after, the roof debris hits the spot Mako was standing on. That was close.

"Alright, Mako? You better make your way to the temple, we'll meet up there. I'll search the others."

"But Ryuko, how..."

"No "But!" I won't die from a fire, Mako, but they will if you won't let me go now! I'll find them, trust me!" she says and calms Mako down. She leaves Mako and runs into the burning village, while Mako feels bad for letting her family alone.

Ryuko watches how people ran away. Everyone is scared and some people have severe wounds. Ryuko coughs, but won't get poisoned to smoke since she is partially life fiber. However, it's clear to her how difficult it is for the other people to get out of the village. This can't be an ordinary fire, she thinks. Nothing can burn that much in such a short time, especially with such a heat and intensity. Eventually, Ryuko arrives at the house of the Mankanshokus and kicks open the burning door.

"Hello? HEY?! CAN ANYONE HEAR ME?!" Ryuko screams and runs through the hall. She gets some minor burns but sustains the pain and continues searching. Arriving at the living room, she finds mother Sukuyo and father Barazo. They are dead. Partially because of the fire, but they've been also hit by a weapon, apparently a sword or something. The wounds caused by the fire look awful, and a few bones slowly get visible too.

"Oh, fuck, fuck, FUCK!" Ryuko notices and searches for Makos little brother Mataro. Quickly arriving at his room, she realizes he's not here anymore. She can't find him in the other rooms either. The fire gets louder and even hotter, Ryuko sweats and can only barely see what is in front of her. As Ryuko leaves the building, she actually finds Mataro, walking around confused and scared.

"Mataro!" she calls him and holds him.

"Ry... uko... Ryu..." he mumbles scared. Mataro shakes scared.

"I got you, Mataro. Hold me!" Ryuko says and picks up Mataro.

"She... is searching for you..." Mataro mumbles.

"Who!?"

Mataro does not answer. Ryuko runs even faster, out of the village, leaving the other people behind, and the screams become louder and even more horrifying. It's a pure nightmare, and Ryuko does not know how this nightmare started. As they leave the village, Ryuko falls down, as something hit her leg. Mataro falls as well. The fire is spreading into the forest, and it looks and feels like hell arrived onto the village. Ryuko tries to get up, but then notices how Mataro is being dragged away. She can only see how he disappears in the fire and smoke. Mataro screams for help but suddenly stops as Ryuko hears a weapon hitting him. Blood splatters into Ryuko's direction. Ryuko runs to Mataro... but he is gone. There's only blood and a few life fibers left.

"Mataro..." Ryuko mumbles sad and angry, bites onto her teeth and runs to the temple to meet up with Mako. Arriving at the little temple, Mako is seen hiding behind a door, watching for Ryuko coming to her. Fire arrives at the temple and the tree around it. Ryuko tries to keep her tears away, but it's difficult.

"RYUKO?!" Mako screams worried and walks to Ryuko. As she notices how sad Ryuko looks, Mako looks sad too.

"Ryuko...?" she asks her friend. Ryuko deeply breathes in with her nose and looks into Mako's innocent face.

"I'm... so sorry, Mako. Mako, I..." she mumbles. Mako becomes sad. Until Ryuko hears someone laughing happily. Mako is paralyzed as something jumps down behind her, and her eyes are advancing, getting bigger. It's a laugh Ryuko and Mako know all too well, and they know exactly who they are dealing with. Around them, dozens of doppelgängers of the Grand Couturier of the REVOCS corporation, Nui Harime, arrive, smiling at them, armed with needle

blades. Ryuko is unable to defend herself and Mako properly as she lacks a blade to use. Nui appears behind Mako and stands up, smiling evil at Ryuko, then to Mako. Her smile becomes bigger. Mako notices Nui's presence and does not dare to turn around.

"You..." Ryuko slowly says with hatred towards Nui. She still has those black arms a year ago, and the few coloured fibers light up a little bit. The once so cold but precise and effective psychopath is gone, and everything that is left in her face is Chaos and madness. She smiles at Ryuko, knowing that she has full control over her enemy.

"Hello, Ryuko." Nui smiles, but she is equally angry at her, that is obvious.

"Let Mako go. You want me, not her." Ryuko demands. Nui suddenly draws both parts of the scissor blade and presents them to Ryuko. She looks into Ryuko's eyes, deeply and with hate, covered by nothing but an innocent, although seemingly forced smile.

"It seems like you lost your little toy, love. It would be a shame if someone gets hurt." Nui laughs and charges an attack.

"MAKO, RUN!" Ryuko screams.

But it is too late. Ryuko watches the scissor blade penetrating Mako's torso. Blood spreads out of Mako, and organs fail. Mako looks at Ryuko scared and full of pain.

"Ryuko... it hurts, it... hurts..." Mako mumbles scared. Harime giggles and extends the blade, ripping Mako into two parts, effectively killing her.

"What's wrong, Matoi?! Isn't this fun enough for you!?" Nui screams at Ryuko angry.

"YOU FUCKING BITCH! I'LL KILL YOU!" Ryuko screams and runs towards Nui, pushing her down. The doppelgängers start laughing

entertained about Ryukos desperate attacks to hurt their mistress even slightly. Nui continues to grab Ryuko at her neck and throws her a few meters away, letting her fall onto the ground.

"YOU CRAZY MONSTER!" Ryuko screams and stands up, hitting Nui's face with her fist, and as she tries to knock her head against Nui, Nui notices the attack. Nui shakes her head entertained and watches Ryuko trying to remove the scissor blades from her hand. With her spare arm, Nui forms a blade, penetrating Ryukos shoulder area, which leads to Ryuko letting off of Nui. Blood spreads onto Harime, but she enjoys the view of Ryuko getting mad. The Grand Couturier then kicks Ryuko away, and doppelgängers walk towards Ryuko, holding her tight so that she can't flee. Ryuko tries to flee but there's no way out of this situation. Not this time. The mad Nui walks in front of Ryuko and looks into her face, with an evil smile.

"When I'll get you into my hands, I'll make you wish you would have stayed dead, you fuck!"

"I'm already dead, dear Ryuko. But I'll always stay with you, love. I hope you enjoyed the performance. There will be a lot more in the future. I'm looking forward to all the fun we have. Until next time." she smiles. The puppets let go of Ryuko. Harime extends the scissor blade and attacks Ryuko, but Ryuko is too slow. She tries to cover her body and the neck, but Ryuko can't defend the attack of the scissor blade. Her arms get cut off, blood spreads, and just as the blades hit Ryukos neck, she starts screaming.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOO!" Ryuko screams.

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It was just a nightmare. Just one of many bad jokes her head was trying to perform. Mako is totally alright, she knows that. Or at the

very least, that's what she hopes - it's been four years since they saw each other. Ryuko sighs and takes a jug from her water bottle. Her head hurts a bit, and she is still tired. It wouldn't change a lot anyway since the alarm would have gone off. It's 6:55 AM.

"Nightmares... or the alarm... eh, who cares." she mumbles and stands up. Ryuko wears a comfy looking, red pyjama. Her hair looks silly, and there's barely light in the sleeping room - red walls, a curtain at the window, shelves, house shoes, the usual stuff. The tired, now 22 year old Ryuko walks into the bathroom and makes herself ready for work. The morning routine usually looks the same - waking up, getting ready in the bathroom, making something to eat in the kitchen, watching boring news and thinking about what she could do after work.

After she's done brushing teeths, she opens the window and notices snow falling. It's not a strong storm or anything, but enough to influence the sight a bit. She then puts on her working clothes - a nice, black suit with white shirt, as well as black pants. That's what she and everyone else has to wear at the place she's working at - it's a rather famous company in asia called "Hokkaido Electrics" which mainly earns it's money with the production and sale of various electronic items like TVs, computers and so on. Despite her only having basic knowledge of how to operate computers and other wares of Hokkaido Electrics, she however proves to be "patient" and "helpful". Ryuko always has to giggle a bit when she thinks about that because it's not true - but when you have a buddy like Houka Inumuta, you can really just apply anywhere and you should get accepted without problems.

Eventually she steps out of her house, the Matoi Mansion. It has been rebuild four years ago, briefly before she had to leave Mako and the village. Thanks to Satsuki the operation got financed, after all, she is the heir and therefore the CEO of REVOCS corporation. Ryuko is second in command. The winter jacket she wears keeps her warm and as she walks through the little garden in front of the mansion, she takes a brief look at the little hill on the left. There is a

grave and a young tree growing. Her father Isshin Matoi lies there. She carefully works on the grave every now and then, keeping it clean and nice, since she still couldn't fully process the death of her father, as well as the death of her friend Senketsu. The young woman knows Senketsu is watching over her but it still doesn't really feel right, and over the years it got more and more clear that she misses him and that he was one of the most important influences of her life. As Ryuko leaves the path that leads to the mansion, she finds herself back in a little village with a bus stop. There is also a gas station, but other than there's nothing interesting. About 0,6 miles away there is however a small town, connected to the train system of Japan. That way it's possible for Ryuko to visit her sister Satsuki if she wants to. The trains here won't disturb Ryuko when she is in her mansion though.

Arriving at the bus stop, Ryuko leans next to a wall and waits for the bus to arrive. She yawns and still appears tired, but her body got used to her being tired most of the time. After a few minutes, the bus finally arrives and Ryuko enters it. The bus driver nods his head to her, and she does the same, like every morning. Then she walks to the seat she always sits in, back in the bus. Leaning into the seat, she looks out of the window and relaxes a bit. The bus temperature is warm and cozy, and it's still rather quiet. Briefly after Ryuko entering the bus, the driver continues his route.

Driving to her job usually takes around 45 minutes, and around that time she always sees the same few faces. Two young men who appear to be students, a woman working on her Laptop and an old man who seems to be tired the entire time and every once in a while even falls asleep. Snow hits the windows of the bus, and the sun rises in approximately thirty minutes. After a while it's possible to see more of the area, and not just forest. There is a little valley with some animals living there. In the distance, near a little lake, is also a temple, where a monk sometimes sits. Today he is not there though. Ryuko peeks at her Smartphone and notices a message sent by Satsuki via chat. Satsuki wrote that she is excited for next Saturday, which is in three days, as they want to watch a movie in cinema.

Ryuko answers that she is also excited and then puts the phone away again. Soon, the bus arrives the city of Kisarazu, which is located at the coast of Tokyo Bay. It's an industrial city, and her working place lies there. Ryuko works as call center agent. Not exactly the most grateful job, but for the moment, it's enough for Ryuko. She didn't complained yet at the very least.

As the bus stops in Kisarazu after passing two more bus stops, Ryuko leaves the bus and walks through the snowy streets. Snow removal vehicles try to fight against the snow. However, it kinda feels nice to just walk through the snowy streets while it's still dark. For an industrial city, Kisarazu looks clean enough to not be considered as such. The call center is just around the corner. It's a little building with two floors and a huge window wall directed to the coast of the bay, which gives a nice view over the city and the sea. Ryuko enters the building and greets the receptionist.

"Good morning, Taro. You look tired." notices Ryuko. Her colleague simply nods and then yawns. Ryuko smiles and walks around the reception to enter the office which is quite big and very aesthetic, as it doesn't feel overloaded. Everyone has enough space to not be disturbed. Thanks to the window wall, enough light enters the building during the day, except for the evening and the morning, but that's where the lights at the wall come in handy. There is also a huge monitor at the wall, showing which agent is available and which one isn't. Ryuko walks up the spiral like stairs up to the second floor where her desk is. It's close to the window wall, hence why she has a good sight on the coast. A nice thought when you think about you having a stressful job. Ryuko greets the few agents that are already at their desks. Arriving at her desk, she boots up the computer and logs into the agent system made for the company, so that she appears as available for everyone.

Slowly the day passes, and around noon the first customers start calling. Ryuko answers and sets up a kind smile.

"Hokkaido Electrics, Ryuko Matoi, how can I help you?"

"Uh, hello? Is this thing on?"

"Hello?"

"Ah! Hello! Am I speaking to Hokkaido Electrics?"

"Yes, that is right."

"Very good! I got a huge problem... my HE TV System 3.2 all of a sudden malfunctioned yesterday and I only have a slight idea of how that could have happened, which is why I am calling you to ask if you could help me."

"Well sure. What exactly do you think happened?"

"My cat and I always watch the weekly Go competitions from Tokushima on TV. But as of yesterday, the TV does not work anymore because of some sort of internal damage. I do not get why though! You need to know, I am working ten hours a day and when I come back, I would be glad to know that my TV works perfectly fine. It sometimes annoys me that much that I just start punching if you get what I mean."

"... punching? Uh, of course, yes! *clears throat* And which kind of "internal damage" do you think was sustained?"

"I don't know! Maybe a fuse died? How should I know? It's not my fault when the TV doesn't survive a stupid rock!" the man answers. Ryuko looks confused. Didn't he just said he has an assumption about what happened?

"A rock?"

"Yes! I'm a very emotional human and I'm always very into what I'm watching. Case in point, when I was watching a movie yesterday which I forgot the name of, and the villain captured the hero, I, I, I just couldn't hold myself back and threw something against the TV. And now it does not work anymore!"

Ryuko shakes her head ashamed and holds the hand at the phone.

"This can't be real, why am I always getting these people..." she mumbles to herself and uses the phone again. A agent next to her smiles at her.

"I see, well, that is indeed very... uh... unfavorable. I can totally understand you are frustrated, however I'm asking you to maybe not attack your TV with items as it increases the chance of it malfunctioning. Besides, I have to point out that Hokkaido Electrics is not in your guilt when you damage the ware you bought."

"But I did not damage anything! Well... I mean yeah, the monitor got some damage, but the TV itself was working fine!"

"... the monitor is also damaged?" Ryuko asks in disbelief.

"Uhm... well, I am an emotional human."

"Yeah, that... is possible. Alright: According to the regulations, I am not allowed to help customers who destroy our products to seemingly. After all, it's possible that you want to accuse us. Do not ask me as I am not the one who came up with the regulations. Honestly, I don't give a shit about what you do with the TV, however I cannot help you if you damage it. I suggest you call one of our service centers in Tokyo as they usually have mechanics available to repair your TV. The service center of Kisarazu does not have mechanics as we are just a little building."

"Okay, but..."

"If you really want to see your semi interesting Go competitions, I'd suggest you call one of our service centers in Tokyo. They probably can still visit you today and repair your TV or get you a new one."

"Oh... well, if that is the case, then... thanks for your time." the customer answers. Ryuko puts the phone away and shakes her head.

"This guy was really annoying, hm, Matoi?" one of her colleagues asks and smiles.

"To be honest, Yukari, I'm only annoyed by clowns like that guy, talking about some sort of "internal damage", just to tell me one minute later "I'm throwing stuff at my TV, look at me, I want my money back!" Ryuko answers and giggles in disbelief.

"No way, he said that?"

"Yeah, he did, which is why I told him to ask one of the service centers down in Tokyo. I couldn't do shit anyways." Ryuko continues. Her colleague nods. Ryuko yawns and makes a little coffee to wake her up again.

The rest of the day advances slowly, but finally, around 5 PM, she is able to pack her stuff and go back to her warm home. Quickly taking the winter jacket, she logs out of the system and walks back to the bus stop, where about ten minutes later, the bus arrives, driving her back to home. The bus she sits in at the moment is a different one and a tad bit more modern than the other one. An intern news system chatters around if something important or simply interesting happened. Ryuko listens to the system as she hears the news jingle.

"Good evening. This is the automatic news system of the prefecture Chiba. First message: An attack regarding a clothing factory was committed around six hours ago. COVERS-sympathizers destroyed the entire factory and scared the workers. The government continues searching. This is the sixth attack in nine months.

Second message: The demand for fish in the prefecture Chiba increased for about 20%. Fishermen are asked and motivated to sell their wares at the local markets.

Third message: The CEO of REVOCS Corporation, Satsuki Kiryuin, kept a public speech this afternoon: "REVOCS is a name that symbolizes shame. I'm ashamed to be the heir of this organisation and all I can do is to apologize for the deeds of my dead mother

Ragyo. Years have passed and yet the name REVOCS is a name that shall be known as one of human failure. Life fibers had the chance of being a valuable tool, but I quickly realized how wrong I am, especially when we think about what damage it dealt to us humans. This is the fifth year in which I am leading REVOCS and I am still not planning on polluting our world with this company..." Miss Kiryuin declined interviews and questions."

"So sorry you have to deal with this crap every year, Satsuki." mumbles Ryuko a bit worried. The snow has stopped falling, and the sun slowly goes down. The bus drives a bit faster than the other one and the route it takes is more optimized, which is why Ryuko arrives sooner. Eventually, the bus arrives at the Matoi-Mansion. Ryuko leaves the bus and walks down the path back to her home. The lights go on automatically and go off at around 11 PM, since Ryuko is in her bed around that time and has no reason to go out anymore. She quickly moves into the warm hall, takes off her shoes and jacket and enters the living room. It has two window doors that to the actual garden in the back. Other than that, the room has warm brown colors, and next to the open and modern kitchen are two big couches, a modern TV from Hokkaido Electrics and the usual stuff you can find in a living room. There is also a nice red carpet on the floor.

Shortly after relaxing her muscles, she moves to the kitchen and starts making a bowl of vegetables, rice and some chicken. It takes around thirty minutes, but the food tastes great and so she takes the time to cook it. While eating, she watches television. The wall behind the table she's sitting on has an image of her and Satsuki hanging, and there is also an image of her father Isshin Matoi. Now that she is done with work and food, she starts cleaning up the rooms at least roughly, according to her checklist she made this morning. As she finishes that task too, she wanders around through her home, not really knowing what to do at the moment. Living in such a huge mansion can feel lonely if there is no one else living with you. The cellar where Isshin worked on his experiments, Senketsu and the scissor blades still exists, but Ryuko never visits it. Just as she walks down the stairs, she hears the phone ringing. It's Satsuki.

Satsuki lives in an apartment of a huge skyscraper in Tokyo - the reason lies more because of her strong and maybe a bit raised personality, but also since a woman like Satsuki wouldn't be expected in an ordinary skyscraper, but more in an mansion like Ryuko lives in. The Kiryuin manor hasn't been visited for a long time already and it is a restricted area no one visits. Some dead life fibers lie around there but not even the government dares to investigate the area. That is because of the Life Fiber sickness, and since the fibers are dead already, there wouldn't be a use of visiting the area anyway to find a cure or do something else with the fibers.

"Hey, Ryuko." Satsuki greets.

"Satsuki, how you doin?" Ryuko asks happily and searches for a little book in her sleeping room. It's on a shelf with other little things like action figures, books or posters.

"I'm better now that those annoying "investigative journalists" are gone."

"Hehe. I heard the speech in the bus a few hours ago, but I think it was just a small part of it. I'm really sorry you have to deal with REVOCS every day. Shouldn't the people know by now that you won't use REVOCS?" Ryuko wonders confused.

"You should be able to expect that but apparently most humans aren't thinking farther than they have to. But what about you? Was your nightmare... less bad this time?" Satsuki asks careful.

"Nah. It was one of the worst."

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"Honestly, no, not really."

"I see."

"Yeah. I'm still wondering whether we could have avoided this stupid sickness back then." Ryuko says. Satsuki hears some guilt out of her voice.

"You couldn't have known what happened. We all couldn't. I too thought that "mother" did not had any other plans left. Shinra Koketsu was her ultimate target, and with the destruction of it, it seemed like she lost. But if I would have known this would lead to one fifth of humanity and both of us becoming victims of a plague that does not have a cure... and which damns all of us to live through nightmares and even hallucinations... *sigh* whatever..." Satsuki explains.

"At the very least Mikisugi and Tsumugu still fight against those COVERS-assholes."

"They give her life to fight the life fibers. Admiring." Satsuki answers. They both become quiet for a few seconds.

"Mhm... you think next saturday there will be a lot of guests in the cinema?" Ryuko thinks loud.

"I hope so. Visiting a cinema is always more interesting when there are more people. Although I have to say, sometimes the screams and the talking is annoying, but I guess that's part of the experience. On the other hand, I didn't chose the best and most expensive cinema for no reason, so we probably won't have any exciting encounters with guests. And the VIP seats are a bonus too." she smiles.

"Well you gotta live with the fact that I'm gonna get us a huge bowl of popcorn and we have to somehow eat it up." Ryuko grins. Satsuki laughs.

"Right, right..."

Both sisters continue to make some more smalltalk - how boring TV has become recently, what the Elite four do at the moment and so

on. After the call, Ryuko notices it's 11 PM which means bed time for her. She is tired anyways. After a shower she puts on her red pyjama - warm and comfortable. The bed is warm too without being too warm or thick. Then she lies onto her side and turns off the lights in her room. Slowly the lights in the other rooms go off too, and it's becoming silent and quiet in the Matoi-Mansion, that is a fact. But there's also the fact that Ryuko will have to endure another nightmare this night. It's possible to live with the Life Fiber sickness, however, she wonders how long it'll take to get her go crazy due to her nightmares. And she also wonders how long it will take to get a cure that will heal her and humanity from that plague. All she wishes is to just have one night without fearing that she gets a nightmare. Peeking one last time out of the window, Ryuko sees stars in the sky, and the moon. There is even a star falling slowly which gives a nice view. Ryuko closes the curtains and starts sleeping shortly after.

During the night, a few boats slowly cruise around the bay of Tokyo. No one is allowed to visit the area around the Honnôuji-Academy. A few small buildings, the ring wall and the tower of the academy peak out of the water due tsunamis moving the island up a few times. The lights of the ships search for humans that do not hold onto the rules of the government.

And then, said falling star falls down to the academy, slowly, and quiet...

When Life Met Death

The ocean in the bay of Tokyo is rather quiet. Snow falls during this quiet night. Ships break through the few waves in the ocean, and the sky is enlightened only by the moon and the few stars. A few men on the ships that search people who try to enter the area of the Honnouji-Academy see some kind of falling star. It approaches the area slowly but steady, although it does not look too dangerous or huge. The top of the academy, the main building and the upper area of the walls reach out of the water, and waves break at them apart. Ships that patrol the area cruise slow to avoid ramming something, especially during the night where they can't see much. That's why they have to keep about 500 meters distance to the academy as well, and there are no exceptions. No one is allowed to enter the academy, as well as leaving it. The mysterious object comes closer, and the men are starting to get cautious.

"You guys see that? Look! Is that some kind of falling star?" one of the men asks curiously. Slowly but steady the group of men that work on the ship gets bigger, and together they watch how this tiny little thing falls from the sky. It really does not look that dangerous, it merely is a little rock and nothing more, or at least that's what they think. The men watch interested as the object falls down, and in the next moment, it slams into one of the walls of the academy. Waves arise, and the walls break. The men are somehow shocked, but also curious. Whatever this thing is, it can't be a coincidence that it fell onto the area of the academy. Even though they are well armed, they do not know what to do next, and so they think about their next move.

The Honnouji-Academy itself is quiet. Besides from the waves that break apart at the half sunken buildings and the walls, there is of course also water in the inner walls. The main building and the peak of the academy also contain water, at least partially. The walls of the buildings are broken, at least at some parts. Water drops out of the windows of the academy every once in a while. The train system is

defect, and rust can be seen. Almost everything of this huge, fortress like building is defect. Here and there are a few little lights that still run on emergency power but that's it. Besides, they wouldn't work much longer anyway. It is however a testimony of how well this academy was built. A part of the wall is completely destroyed thanks to the rock like object. Water moves through the gap that appeared now that the rock has slammed the walls. Smoke arises, and the ground is burning. Slowly, two little ships start cruising to the academy to investigate whatever landed there. Briefly after, the smoke slowly disappears, and the rock starts to open itself. Stones fell out, and red fibers start moving out of it, slowly, but precise.

And then it is audible how something tries to move out of the rock. The red fibers collect themselves onto the ground the rock is on. Water slams the walls and falls onto the ground, where the red fibers lie, as well as some snow. It's ice cold. But the area the rock has fallen onto is still hot - hot enough to burn yourself at the very least. More and more fibers find together, and after a minute, enough of them collected each other, slowly forming something out of them. Something like a human body. It takes a moment, but then the first body parts become visible. Eyes that are dark blue and huge, a nose and a mouth form. Muscles become visible and start moving so that this unknown being gets used to it's new form. And then, after a half minute passes, a smile forms. A face becomes visible - a young, pretty looking man with blonde hair. He looks around curious, as this world is a completely new one for him, and he certainly is interested in it. Well, the area he landed on is without a doubt a very unique and prominent one, and so this young man slowly starts his way to the top of the, of water and plants overgrown academy.

Water drops here and there, and the waves slowly become stronger. The cold water and the temperature of this area seem to not affect him, and slowly, the first clothes become visible. He curiously looks around and finds a huge hole, which probably formed itself through an explosion or a different violent effect. It appears to be the only way into the academy without diving or swimming. The man starts moving to the hole by jumping from one part of the academy walls to

another. He does however not mind the water that lands onto his legs, since it's the water that came from the waves. As he balances to the hole, he notices it still is about four meters higher than him - not even a high jump would be enough to reach it. Knowing that, he starts moving both of his arms slowly into the air, and life fibers spread out of his hands. The fibers construct some kind of surface. With that surface he is able to climb up, and as he reaches the hole, walking into the academy, the surface vanishes, and the life fibers move back to him, slowly, but steady.

Arriving at one of the halls of the academy, it now becomes visible how much damage it had to sustain because of all the years being sunken in the water. Most of the stuff here is broken or rusty, and the few lights that still work only work thanks to the emergency power. A few signs still hang onto the walls, with words like "Disciplinary Office" or "Class room". Other than that, water has filled this area too. With every step, water moves, as it is high enough to cover the feets of a person. The mysterious young man slowly walks through the halls until he reaches an elevator, that however does not work anymore, like almost everything else in this old building. Next to the elevator are stairs which the man start to slowly walk up. While doing that, he sometimes is able to see a few broken walls, which give a view onto Tokyo and Kisarazu. Unimpressed, he walks the stairs up until he reaches the highest floors. Two minutes later, he arrives at the private room of the Elite-four and where they met every time to do smalltalk, planning stuff or eat together. The chairs here are fully broken and you can't sit on them anymore. Water drops from the ceiling. There is also a group photo of Satsuki Kiryuin and her four friends that lies onto a table. The glass of the photo is destroyed, but as he removes it, the man notices quickly that the image itself still looks good enough to recognize the people visible on the image. He takes a closer look at the image. He is especially interested in Satsuki. Satsuki is looking seriously and somewhat evil, while Nonon seems mischievous. Gamagoori looks dead serious, Sanageyama proud and Inumuta appears to be bored. Then, the man throws away the image and moves on.

Arriving at the Student council office, the man notices snow falling onto the old desk of Satsuki Kiryuin. The noble chair she was always sitting on to watch the moon and drink tea her butler Soroi made is destroyed. The desk as well, and the few electronic items in the room are broken too. It somehow feels especially cold here, but then again, the man does not care about the cold, as it seems. There's a mirror hanging in the room, in which he looks into it. He wears a nice looking pink vest with yellow tie, and yellow trousers. There are also two bowties on his body - one on his neck, the other one on his hair, which also looks smooth and fluffly. It probably feels nice too. On the desk are a few old documents that can't be read anymore though. As he approaches the window wall, the view onto Tokyo is even better and only now nearly describable.

Huge waves break apart at the ships that approach the academy slowly. The young man smiles slightly and hums a joyful "Mhm." As he turns around to take a short last look at the room, he notices something interesting. There are a few images hanging on the wall of the room. Images of Satsuki, images of the Honnouji-Academy, an image of Satsuki with her mother Ragyo Kiryuin and her second... "sister"... Nui Harime... and an image of Ryuko Matoi, wearing her Kamui Senketsu during combat. The image of Ryuko probably was made while she was fighting against one of the four devas, and from the looks of it, it was a fight between her and Ira Gamagoori. He curiously picks up the image and looks closely onto Ryuko. Then he smiles and throws the picture away. After that, he proceeds to walk up the last few stairs which lead him to the top of the academy. The top, where Satsuki Kiryuin once told her famous speech. A few dead and old life fibers lie around here, and so he begins his work, by letting a ball of yellow and red fibers fall on the ground. The fibers slowly approach the dead fibers and touch them. Some of them, not all, but a few seem to regenerate. At the very least there is movement.

Shortly after, something comes back to life. It is an COVERS - an old weapon, once used by Ragyo Kiryuin. The other fibers on the top of the academy do not regenerate however, or if they do, it's too slow to

actually be interesting for this man. The man takes a closer look at the COVERS, which seems to be absolutely loyal towards him, as it seems that it awaits orders from him. But the only thing the COVERS receives is a destruction of its structure by the man with nothing but one of his short fingernails. Shortly after, the COVERS explodes into thousands of life fibers. Disappointed, he looks down onto the dead remains of the COVERS and walks down the top. He starts to throw out the yellow fiber balls. And slowly, a few life fibers appear, but they seem to be weak, as they do not light up as much as a strong and normal life fiber - they probably could be cut apart with nothing but a normal scissor.

The fibers slowly infest the, with water and plants overgrown academy. And even though if he didn't expected it, something starts to regenerate slowly on the top of the academy. But it is not a COVERS, or a weapon, or simply some clothes... it is something different. Something like a human made out of life fiber. Snow falls onto it, and it slowly becomes clear that this is a female body. The snow slowly starts to become more, and the sight gets worse. The ships try to approach the academy carefully, and their lights reach the walls of this sunken place.

And then, you can hear something breathing. And it's scared.

"NO!" is what you can hear from this being. A face forms, and the hair starts to regenerate. It breathes, and it breathes scared and hysterically. But it breathes, and that is the important part. Eyes appear - dark blue and huge, and an eye patch, and it becomes clear that this once dead being is no one else than Nui Harime. And she is scared. Scared of seeing what happened to this world, or better, what did not happen to it. Her body is extremely weak and the body parts have to regenerate properly. A process that can take a few minutes to hours. The neck is fully broken, and only visible life fibers hold it together. The arms slowly get their skin color, the fingers are broken, and the torso regenerates the slowest. All of those body parts are only there. It is clear what they appear to be, but they don't look human yet. Only fiber holes are visible. Nui takes

a look at the ocean and the lights of Tokyo. And as she sees the lights of Tokyo and how beautiful their colours are, she takes her eye patch off. She doesn't need it anymore. Her eye is back, but it has a huge scar that looks like a fiber hole. It will never fully regenerate, unlike the other holes. This eye will always mark Nui as a life fiber being and not as an human. Nui holds her eye patch in her still regenerating right hand and holds it tight as she looks at Tokyo. The night life is up as it seems.

This view let's her fall down onto a wall, and only a shocked face expression is left. This is what she sacrificed herself for. This is the reason why she ended her life - all to end this world too. Just to find out that his sacrifice was worthless. She realizes how everything she tried to accomplish with her mother and her friend and colleague Rei Hoomaru. And all of it was worthless. She can't find words for that. But it's unbelievable cold. The weak Nui slowly stands up and walks to the few remains of the COVERS that has been destroyed a few minutes before, and with her weak but at the very least still experienced tailor hands, she forms a few small clothes to at least cover up her breasts and hips. It's better than nothing.

"... how is this possible." she mumbles overwhelmed. That feeling of throwing away your life worthlessly is one she can't describe to herself. She looks around exhausted.

"... Lady... Ragyo..." she mumbles depressed and sits down. She sighs and watches her hands slowly regenerating. The arms look normal again - no black arms like five years ago. She puts her eye patch into a little pocket and proceeds to slowly walk down the stairs of the building until she arrives in the lower parts of the academy. Here she is able to see the ships that dock onto the wall, and the first people jump onto the wall, armed with rifles. They look like ants from here.

"Humans." she mumbles and walks down. Then she hears a noise she wouldn't have expected to hear. A quiet giggle is audible, and it seems to be one she knows. Carefully she walks down and sees a COVERS patroulling the hall slowly. The moment it sees Nui, it tries

to reach her. Apparently it is hostile towards her, and so Nui walks away and into a classroom. Luckily, the COVERS is slower than her, as it had to regenerate first too. Nui opens a locker in the classroom and closes it. Then she waits for the COVERS, and as it arrives into the room, it seems to be confused, hovering around the room, but it is not able to find Nui. The COVERS gives up.

Everything Nui can hear besides the COVERS are the waves and the water drops, and a light that flickers around in the hall next to the classroom. Nui sneaks out of the locker and looks around. She carefully walks through the halls, still weak, and then she hears footsteps. She quickly walks into a huge area - it seems to be the stitching halls of Shiro Iori. No one seems to be here. There are a few old life fibers left on the ground which she collects quickly to tailor some warm clothes, but then she hears someone giggling again. Nui can feel the presence of this being that moves around the academy. Then she quietly moves behind a desk and waits.

The man appears.

"Hariime..." he sings quietly. His voice sounds calm and soft but the way he says her name is awful and dangerous, and so it seems paradox. Nui does seem to know this man, which is why she does not interfere or attack him from behind. If a being like Nui, who is one of the most powerful life fibers earth has ever seen, has to hide from someone else, you can be sure that this enemy she faces is on a different level from everything the world has seen. The steps become louder. Nui holds her breath. The man looks into Nui's direction but he seems to not know where she is. Or does he?

"So you were the fiber that did not regenerate up there...?" he asks calm. Nui hears how life fibers materialize, and then she hears two taps. He seems to have a weapon. The steps become louder, and then they suddenly stop. Nui can hear his breath.

"You should be dead. Exiled and in the beyond... yet you prefer to play hide and seek. It was scary, wasn't it, my dear?" he asks and smiles. Nui tries to hold her breath longer but she has to stop any

moment. Then she can hear steps again. He's moving away from Nui as it seems. Nui does not dare to take a look.

"Look at you... the predecessor is hiding. She is scared. We all know that." he smiles. Nui quietly breathes in and looks out. She can see the back of the man. Then she quietly sneaks to a different cover. There is a little broken wall she could sneak through. The man turns his head into her direction, and Nui hides again, closing her eyes, hoping he won't see her.

"It's funny. You love fun, don't you? I do." he says and walks out of the room. Nui quickly climbs through the broken wall and enters another classroom. She takes cover behind a wall and looks into the hall where the man walks around. She hears more footsteps all of a sudden. Something is moving on the left side of the hall. Nui hides behind the wall and sees around the corner something dark. It seems to be Nonon Jakuzure, but... not the Nonon she once saw. Her body and clothes are black, that's for sure. Nui walks out of the classroom as the Nonon-Doppelgänger passes by, and enters the hall. Carefully moving through the hall, she sees a little hole that leads out of the academy. A hole the man hasn't seen apparently. It leads to the walls probably. Nui crouches to it while the man looks out of the broken windows of the academy, watching the humans approach his location. He smiles, while the Nonon-Doppelgänger walks around, searching for Nui. While the man approaches the humans, Nui climbs out of the academy and lands onto the wall. Her legs hurt as they are still weak, and the water that hits Nui's body is painful as it fills the fiber holes. Nui moans in pain but tries to be as quiet as possible. While she carefully sneaks away, she can hear the humans talking with the man. She can't see them though as they are behind a wall.

"Alright, buddy. Why are you here and what are you doing here?" one of the men asks.

"What is a handsome man like you doing here, hm?"

"What the fuck are you doing here? Answer them!" another one threatens.

"Hm... really... is that how you humans greet old friends, yes...?" he asks and smiles apparently.

"Old friends? Are you drunk?!" someone asks. Nui sneaks onto one of the boats. There is a man onto, sitting in the bridge of the ship. He waits for his friends to clear the situation. Fibers move out of the academy and infest the outer walls slowly. Then, all of a sudden, Nui can hear how a weapon is unlocked.

"Alright, last chance, what are you doing here?!" one of the men asks scared but also angry. And everything else Nui can hear are battle noises - of some extent, as no weapon is fired. Awful noises, best explained as if flesh exploded. No one says something.

Well, there is a slight giggle to hear, and then a decapitated head rolling into the ocean. Life fibers seem to hold onto it. The face of that man is shocked. Nui climbs onto the boat and hides as the mysterious man comes closer to the boats. Nui quickly approaches the man on the bridge and picks up a baton that lied onto a desk. With that, she approaches the man who is not aware of her presence, and then she quickly attacks him several times with it. Blood spreads partially, but she seems to only incapacitate him. She is too weak to kill him. It's surprising enough for her to be capable of actually incapacitating someone. Quickly walking to the console, she tries to lift the anchor, and after a few wrong buttons, she is able to lift it. Eventually she moves a regulator up which controls the speed of the boat. The boat starts to move slowly and apparently towards Tokyo. With a somewhat relieved face she walks out of the bridge and takes a look at Honnouji-Academy. The man sees Nui on the boat, but all he does is smile at her. Nui then falls onto a bank behind her and looks at the moon, as the boat drives away. Slowly breathing. Her left eye feels painful thanks to the fresh scar.

"Ichiro..." she mumbles worried. Whatever this guy wants to accomplish, Nui doesn't like it...

... and that has to mean something.

An Oath, Never Fulfilled

AN: Had to reupload the chapter. There were some major problems when I took a look at it the next day. Hope it works now. Thanks for the reviews, they're really motivating. :)

The next saturday...

Tokyo at 11 AM. The city is quite lively - people pursue their activities. They go shopping, they buy food, drive around due to their job or just walk around in the capital city of Japan. Tokyo still suffers the most from the REVOCS propaganda. No matter where you look at, up to this day you can see posters of the corporation. On those posters you usually see happy looking people wearing clothes tailored by REVOCS. They would certainly think different about REVOCS today, unless they knew about what it planned in the first place.

The city itself however is dilapidated. Most people here are poor or suffer from the Life Fiber sickness. Most of the buildings here need to be renovated, and steam rises from the alleys. The streets are full and if you would be hunted by the police, you probably wouldn't have a problem hiding there. Criminality in this town is also higher than in other huge cities of Japan, like Ôsaka or Nagoya. Walking in those huge amounts of people on the streets feels uncomfortable and can sometimes be dangerous, but somehow you have to buy your food here. Rich people who live here definitely can have a good time in Tokyo, but even then, this does not count for everyone.

"Fuck that Kiryuin!" someone screams annoyed in the streets. Satsuki is annoyed by these words and continues to move forward, past the people, wearing nothing but a usual hoodie, a poor looking jeans and dirty shoes. She wears a hood so that she won't be detected by civilians. That's because Satsuki isn't very beloved in Japan, or really, in the world in general, thanks to the deeds of her mother and her corporation. Being the heir of REVOCS is an

ungrateful job, even if you can be one of the most richest - and technically powerful - persons in the world. If you wouldn't mind about your reputation, it would even be better. But Satsuki is not like that. Satsuki may be able to ignore a few negative voices, but if most parts of the world start to hate her for something that is not her fault, well, at least not entirely, then it does scratch her a bit. The insult did not go towards her in person though, but more because of the speech she gave a few days ago which is repeated on some monitors hanging on the skyscrapers and business areas of Tokyo, so that everyone hears about what she says. On those monitors, Satsuki is visible, wearing a noble white suit with blue stripes, similar to her old Kamui Junketsu, while holding her speech. The general mood of the streets of Tokyo is tense anyway.

Briefly before arriving at the skyscraper she lives in, she's being pushed away by a young man who seems to be drunk too. Satsuki falls down and people walk over her, although they don't notice who they are actually walking on. That is a good thing, probably. Satsuki sighs annoyed and stands up, holding her wallet tight, because she just came back from the bank to get some money for the evening with Ryuko. Arriving in the skyscraper, she opens the entrance and takes the elevator. She does not take off her hood yet since no one should find out where she lives. It's probably already known to some people, but then either they did not say anything or they plan something. Satsuki does not really know that, and even if she is not a person that gets afraid so easily, she does have to be a bit more careful than usual. The first ten floors are pretty dirty and boring, and there are more poor people living than in the upper ones. The skyscraper that consists of about 25 floors does have some benefits, at least in the highest floors. Satsuki lives in the 22. floor. She changed her name so that the landlord does not know who she actually is. As the elevator arrives and Satsuki leaves it, she puts down the hood and walks through the beautiful, with red colors dyed hall. Eventually, she opens the door to her apartment and enters it, closing the door again. Relieved, she walks into the living room. The interior is expensive and the quality is excellent, and a window wall

allows Satsuki to look down at Tokyo. Her apartment would be huge enough for three people.

The young woman walks into the kitchen and starts the water heater to prepare a tea. It always reminds her of her butler Soroï when she uses the heater, which makes her smile slightly. While the water starts getting warm, she walks back into the living room to change her clothes. She casually wears a light blue shirt and white trousers. Tokyo looks like a total disaster from up here, in which not a lot of people would like to live in, or at least that's what you could think. The poverty never cooled off after the end of World War 2. She is able to see the REVOCS headquarters and it's huge industrial area, with the roof that covers the inner parts of the area and the factories. Satsuki hates this building and every time she looks at it, her face expression slowly changes into one that makes you think something died inside her again. At the very least she has two loyal workers over there who she can trust - Rei Hoomaru and her Butler Soroï who still works for her, but now at REVOCS, helping out Hoomaru. When the water heater makes an alarm, Satsuki walks into the kitchen and makes her tea ready. Then she waits a minute to let it cool off a bit. While waiting, she calls the REVOCS headquarter, and after a few seconds, the call is commenced.

"Good day. You are speaking to a worker of the REVOCS corporation, how can I help you?"

"Satsuki Kiryuin. Connect me to the presidential office."

"Very well, Lady Kiryuin." she hears. REVOCS is more or less active since Satsuki took it over shortly after the death of Ragyo Kiryuin. The few workers over there only work to keep the factories and tools intact in case an interested company offers to buy a few buildings. And there's also the fact that if she closes REVOCS entirely, a lot of people would lose their jobs. And since she has enough money for thousands of years, it does not hurt her holding REVOCS active. Wares are not produced anymore. No clothes, nothing. And that's for the best, at least that's what Satsuki thinks. The call with the office is commenced.

"REVOCS headquarter, presidential office, Rei Hoomaru?" says Hoomaru. Satsuki smiles a bit.

"Rei."

"Oh, Lady Satsuki?"

"Hello Rei. I wanted to ask for a report due to the small explosion in the third floor."

"Of course, Lady Satsuki. According to the mechanics, a sewing machine exploded after a worker tried to repair it. The machine cannot be repaired but I already ordered a new one from a rather small company."

"Good."

"Is there anything else you want, Lady Satsuki?" Hoomaru asks kindly.

"No. But Rei... even though you love your job and the building even more, I would recommend you leave work a few hours earlier today. I'll pay the hours."

"Thanks, but why?"

"I'm seeing this... building, and every day I wish it would be a normal headquarter like every normal company. A building that offers jobs for normal people... but that's not what it is. It is a symbol of shame and disappointment and the people who work there, like you, deserve something far better. Trust me, you don't have to work until 6 PM again. I'll pay the last two hours for you. You deserve something better and I'm sorry I can't find anything for you."

"I will consider it, Lady Satsuki. Thank you." Rei says grateful.

"Of course, Rei. I wish you a good day." Satsuki wishes calmly and sips from her tea. It smells like chamomile. Hoomaru puts the phone away.

Satsuki has some head aches when she takes a look at the city, which makes the tea even more valuable and enjoyable to drink. It's of course nothing she could compare with the tea Soroi always made, but it does the job fairly fine. Satsuki sighs and shakes her head. She feels a bit cold what surprises her slightly. Satsuki sips from the tea again and turns around to sit down onto her couch, but as she turns around, she stops moving, with her eyes getting bigger.

Her mother Ragyo stands in the room, watching her. Ragyo does not smile, she does not even look evil. All she does is standing there. But with every movement Satsuki makes, she moves her eyes. When Satsuki moves to the left, the eyes move to the left too. Satsuki feels uncomfortable even though she knows it's just a hallucination thanks to the Life Fiber sickness.

"You are not real." Satsuki says annoyed and walks back to the kitchen to put the empty tea cup away. Putting it away, she notices Ragyo standing at the door, blocking the path out of the room, watching closely what her daughter does. Satsuki watches the hallucination and looks into it's eyes, but it doesn't help at all. Satsuki looks away after a short while as she can't win a fight with eye contact only, especially if it's a hallucination that is not even real. Satsuki walks through the second door that is in the room which leads back to the hall of her apartment. Via the hall she is able to walk to the living room. She then sits down onto the couch and turns the TV on. When the TV turns on, an advertisement of REVOCS is running. Ragyo is also seen in it, talking about her newest product made by the Grand Couturier - a suit, looking exactly like a COVERS. Grumbling, Satsuki switches the channel, but every channel she visits has the same advertisement. Therefore, she turns the TV off, and when she blinks with her eyes, all of a sudden, her mother stands right in front of her, watching deeply into Satsuki's eyes - all of that in the moment she stood up. That does intimidate Satsuki a little bit, but then she looks into Ragyo's eyes.

"I am not afraid of you, "mother." Satsuki says polite, but full of hate.

"We'll see." Satsuki hears from behind. She turns around, and suddenly there's another hallucination of Ragyo. Satsuki turns around again and a third hallucination appears. Slowly but steadily more and more hallucinations of Ragyo appear. And then, everything happens quick. Life fibers crawl the walls up, making uncomfortable noises, and every Ragyo hallucination looks at Satsuki. Satsuki is able to move through those hallucinations, but doing so causes the pressure in her head to increase. Passing through too many hallucinations can cause Satsuki to become unconscious. These hallucinations start to slowly walk towards Satsuki. Satsuki closes her eyes as a reaction, hoping that nothing will happen... at nothing happens indeed.

The hallucinations are gone. Satsuki breathes in relieved and walks to the kitchen to make another tea to decrease the pressure in her head, but then, all of a sudden, another hallucination appears, attacking Satsuki with a fist. Satsuki, even though the attack was nothing physical, feels like she got hit, and falls back. She hits her head onto the couch but since it's a good and soft one, it doesn't really hurt or is dangerous. Satsuki grumbles angry.

"... fuck this sickness." she mumbles evil and stands up. Ragyo disappears for good. After a short sigh she makes her tea and reminds herself of her and Ryuko going to the cinema today. And that lightens her mood up quite a bit.

One hour later...

A ship arrives slowly the coast of the Bay of Tokyo. It's cloudy and a bit cold, and the waves are not calm, unlike the few nights ago. The coast is silent and not a lot of people pass by here. Apparently not much happens here. With full speed, the ship rams onto the coast, stranding. Nui leaves the bridge and takes a look at it. Finally, she reached the main island of Japan, Honshu. Her body is fully regenerated, and only the scar on her left eye is left. Then she hears someone moaning from the bridge.

"Mhm! Help!" someone moans. Nui rolls her eyes and walks back to the bridge. The man she attacked with a baton got unconscious for a while and influenced by a few life fibers Nui inserted so that he keeps quiet during the trip to the coast. Apparently the influence has ended automatically. He seems to believe that they arrived in a port. Nui opens the door and looks at the worried man, who notices her.

"Man, why would you do that?!" the man asks Nui angry, trying to kick her with his leg. Nui squats down, looking at the man.

"Make yourself useful, little human. The first thing you say after waking up is "help." Nui jokes cold.

"Grr..."

"Since you are awake... what day do we have?" Nui asks curiously and smiles kindly.

"You let me go if I tell you, right?"

"Which day do we have today?" Nui asks more impatiently. The man notices Nui's scar and the fibers moving through it.

"What is that thing on your eye?!"

"Life fibers." she smiles.

"Life fibers!? Wait... the... the hair, and this face, that... I know who you are! Aren't you that fucking tailor bitch from REVOCS!?"

Nui smiles as a reaction.

"You... you are the reason why this fucking Life Fiber sickness exists?!" And you laugh about it?"

"Of course, why shouldn't I? Besides, what is that Life Fiber sickness? Sounds funny. What does it do?"

"BECAUSE OF THAT SICKNESS MY WIFE DIED, YOU WHORE! WAIT UNTIL I GET YOU!" the man screams. Nui laughs.

"Your poor wife, I bet she had a cruel death." Nui answers sassy and smiles. When she stands up to leave the man, he suddenly frees himself as the ropes Nui used to keep the man as a hostage weren't as strong as they looked like. He jumps at Nui and hits her into the face.

Nui defends herself by punching the face of this thirty year old man. And again. And again. Thanks to Nui's Life fiber body, her attacks are stronger by default, which is why the man sustains a bad wound onto his face. He coughs blood but continues attacking Nui. Then he takes the baton Nui used and hits her with it. The Grand Couturier gets hit on the arm and the upper body, until Nui kicks him away, drawing the baton to her with a few life fibers that spread out of her fingers. She still is not strong enough to change body parts like her arms to make them weapons, which is why she has to rely on her other abilities and usual weapons. Nui throws the baton onto the man who falls down after being hit in the face with it. After that, she sits onto the mans torso, laying her legs onto his arms. With a murderous but satisfied face expression she looks into the face of the man and starts to strangle him, smiling while doing that.

"You... gr... gr..." he mumbles. Nui strangles even harder, and she enjoys it. The man then activates a harpoon that lies behind them, shooting Nui into her leg. Nui lets off of him. He pushes off Nui and breathes air, then runs to a safety box hanging on the wall, taking out a pistol which is already loaded. Panicky, he is able to shoot Nui.

Nui get's shot seven times. Three shots into her chest, two into the shoulders, two in the head. All Nui does is smile while the man has to see how she regenerates. He panics as he sees that his attack didn't help at all. The young, psychopathic woman regenerates, attacking the man briefly before he finishes reloading the weapon. She throws the weapon away and throws him to the ship's console which leads the anchor to fall down.

"Stupid little human." she smiles and uses life fibers to drag the man to her. He falls with his head onto the ground. Blood spreads onto the ground, and the wounds on his head look ugly and surely have to hurt, but it gets worse, once Nui rips out the safety box that hung onto the wall.

"So much fun in such a short time." she says surprised, smiles and then proceeds to slam the safety box brutally onto the head of the man. And again. And again. And again. And with every hit, the head opens more and more, until the brain gets visible, and she still continues, because she hates humans. The man tries to do something but it is too late for him. Spasms are visible and all he is able to do is one last sad breath, until Nui throws the Box onto his head. His head gets crushed slightly. The bridge is a real mess now, and Nui herself is covered in blood. She breathes some air. She shakes her head in disbelief.

"Could have survived, poop head." she chants and leaves the bridge. She jumps into the water on purpose to clean off the blood, and then she swims out and walks to the highway that leads to Tokyo. From here, it's about two hours of march. At least that's what she guesses. Nui breathes some more air and then starts walking.

A bit later...

"Lady Satsuki..." says Ira Gamagoori via the phone.

"Ira. How many times do I have to tell you that I was Lady Satsuki?" Satsuki smiles.

"My apologies. My ideals still shine through as you know. I can't change that easily." he laughs.

"I know. I'm not accusing you of anything." she answers.

"How are you doing, Lady Satsuki?"

"I'm fine. A bit tired, like always, but other than that... if it wouldn't be for the morning where I had to go out, the day would have been better, but I find joy in the thought of visiting the cinema with my sister today."

"I'm glad to hear that, Lady... Satsuki." he smiles, because he said it again.

"How is your family doing?"

"They're fine. Thanks to my help we've been able to renovate a nice little mansion. Without me it would have taken a few dozens of years. That's why you should always eat up when you are young."

"Unless you want trouble?" Satsuki laughs.

"Haha! You should come visit us when you have some spare time. You'll probably like it, even though if it won't meet your standards of a mansion you would prefer."

"Ira, when it comes to friends, I'm not selective. Oh... Ryuko asked me yesterday if I could ask you how Mako Mankanshoku is doing." Satsuki mentions.

"Ah. Mankanshoku is doing well. She does miss Ryuko a lot though. However, I'm trying to cheer her up whenever we meet each other. I like her. She's a fine woman. Bit weird, but I guess we all are weird in our own ways."

"Mhm. Yes, you always talk a bit different when we talk about her."

"That's... well that's not entirely right, Lady Satsuki!"

"You said it again." Satsuki giggles.

"Hrmpf. I'll learn it eventually." Gamagoori answers proudly.

"My dear friend, I will see if I can find some time next week to visit you. Inumuta was trying to help me regarding a potential buyer of

REVOCS. He told me about one. That's why it has to wait, I'm afraid."

"I see. Well, it's good that you called me. I will send you an invitation next week to remind you, if you allow it."

"Of course, Ira."

"Very well. I wish you a good day and hopefully an entertaining evening, Sat... suki. Hah!"

"See. It works!"

"Haha! Seems like I do learn faster than I thought!" Gamagoori laughs. Both friends say good bye and put their phones away. Then, Satsuki walks to the couch and sits onto it. She can't await the evening with Ryuko anymore.

At the same time, Ryuko works in the call center, boring herself to death. She didn't had to answer a call yet. That is a blessing and a curse at the same time. Curse, because time just won't fly off, and blessing because the stress stays at zero percent. That's why she watches the coast by looking out of the window wall. The sun looks nice today, although it won't stay up much longer. She smiles with the pining thought of Senketsu watching her every time she sees the sun.

"... a lot of things would be much easier if you would still be here, Senketsu. Imagine you'd work here too... hehe, gosh, that would be absurd." she thinks and needs to laugh a bit. The thought of her best friend watching over her is comforting but sad. And it was only "clothes." She never really got over his death. Whenever she thinks of her dad, she has to think of Senketsu and vice versa. Then she yawns and leans back into the chair she sits on, taking a look at the clock. She's almost allowed to go to home after such an boring day. With a ticket she is allowed to take the train to Tokyo - that ticket has been bought yesterday already. Ryuko already smells the popcorn. She kinda likes it.

"It's gonna be awesome, Satsuki. First cinema, then something good at the restaurant. Man..." she thinks and grins happily.

Time goes by and around 3 PM, Ryuko finally can go home again. Since it's a saturday, her working time is a bit different. While she travels to her home again, Tokyo still is full of live. Between the groups of people, Nui sneaks through them, negatively surprised about how less changed here. Didn't the world suffer at all from Ragyo's and her plans? Did Shinra Koketsu fail? And what is that Life Fiber Sickness? To answer that question, she walks to the REVOCS complex and it's industrial area. The main building and tower is well visible from the plaza of Tokyo already, and from here you can already get a good idea of how big the complex truly is. Several kilometers to be exact. The smell of the city and of the humans grosses Nui out, and only with effort she is able to walk through the masses of humans, disguised as her Alter Ego Shinjiro Nagita. While walking through the city, she's being pushed by several people, which is sadly nothing unusual. Satsuki had to experience it too. Normally, Nui wouldn't be so annoyed and rather happy like she always is, but right now all she wants to know is why nothing really happened here. Then she notices Satsuki Kiryuin on one of the monitors.

"So you are still alive, sweet Satsuki?" she thinks curiously and slowly arrives in the industrial areas of Tokyo. They're not really quiet, but even uglier than the city itself already is. The gigantic REVOCS-Tower is perfectly visible. Relieved, she continues walking and turns herself back into her true form while she is in the shadows. The relieve doesn't hold long though when she realizes there are humans guarding the entrance. Nui tries to get past them but they stop her.

"Hey! Where do you think you're going, Lady?" one of the guards asks. Nui looks confused at the guard and shakes her head, then she continues walking. The guards follow her confused, and then one of them pushes her to them.

"Hey! Entrance is not allowed for people like you! You better go now!" one of the guards screams annoyed and holds a baton ready. Nui pinches her eyes."

"Careful, little guard." she says and forces the guard to let her go. Then the guards see the scar in her eye and consider a second time if what they just did was a good idea. Nui smiles when they realize what is going on.

"But..." one of the guards tries to say.

"Careeeeeeeefulllll..." she answers a second time and continues walking. She arrives in the inner parts of the REVOCS complex, which is covered. Building these huge roofs took years obviously. Plants and flowers grow or hang at the walls, and the white, steril walls and red ground deliver a very elitarian and noble feeling. Banner of REVOCS still hang around, and the temperature is fully alright. However, back then, there was a very slight scent of lily to smell. Today the building stinks just like any other factory you can find in Tokyo, which does annoy Nui a little bit, although she does not show it. It gets more annoying as she arrives at the reception.

"Who are you and what are you doing here? What are these clothes? God! You look terrible! How did you come in!?" the receptionist asks annoyed, looking at Nui's dirty and cheap clothes. It gets even more weird when he sees that her hair looks fine more or less, in contrast to the bad clothes.

"You stupid little human really think you could ask ME what I am doing in MY home?" Nui asks confused.

"Stupid little human? Who the hell are you!?" the receptionist asks angry. Again, Nui pinches her eyes. What is going on here?

"I am your boss. Nui Harime, Grand Couturier of REVOCS. But of course individuals like you forget there is something superior so it doesn't make you look like you are worthless. Which you are, by the way." she says mockingly.

"Nui Harime?! Didn't you die during an accident? How is this possible!? And what is that scar in your eye, is..." and suddenly, the man stops talking when Nui uses life fibers to control his mind. His eyes become red and fibers shine through them. Annoyed, Nui moves on and enters one of the many elevators that give a great sight onto the industrial area, since their walls are made of thick glass, strong like concrete. Getting that concrete like walls was pretty expensive, but then again, this is REVOCS. REVOCS can buy it. The higher she comes with the elevator, the nobler and prettier the floors become. She can also see one of the many stitching halls she once controlled, but now they are inactive. No one is working there anymore. Still, she does not know what is going on here. There aren't even COVERS or crates with Life fibers left. Time to ask Lady Ragyo, she thinks.

Arriving in the highest floor, the elevator opens and Nui enters the lobby of the presidential office - the office and home of Lady Ragyo. The quarters of the Grand Couturier are also located here, next to the office where Hoomaru works in. A lot of portraits of Lady Ragyo hang here, and some of the most famous and beloved REVOCS posters hang here too. Speaking of Hoomaru, Nui can hear her talking on the other side of the door. The Life Fiber being smiles mischievous to mock her "friend" a bit before asking Lady Ragyo what is going on. Hoomaru seems to have finished the call now. At the very least she stopped talking. Nui opens the door, entering Hoomarus office which is located before Lady Ragyos and next to Nui Harime's. A huge, half circle like desk with a monitor and several shelves full of documents stand here. Behind the desk and the chair Hoomaru sits on, there is a huge, imposant logo of REVOCS. If you walk to the right side of the desk, there are stairs that lead up to the presidential office of Ragyo Kiryuin. The walls are white and the interior is modern, and there are red carpets on the ground. Temperature is also comfortable.

Hoomaru can't really believe Nui Harime standing in front of her all of a sudden. Nui never really treated her with respect since she is a human. However: Nui does like Hoomaru far more than any other

human and there are times. Nui never says it, but she kind of considers Hoomaru as a friend - just the way how she treats her friend is extremely questionable. On the other hand, Nui herself is a questionable person to say the least, and she probably doesn't even really know how to handle friends. Anyway: Having a friend like Nui is something no one except Hoomaru can say, so that is something.

"Hoomaru! You look great!" Nui smiles. Hoomaru nods and clears her throat. She still wears the same suit like always, the only difference to find is that the REVOCS logo has disappeared. Her hair style didn't change either. Except for the personality and ideals, Hoomaru is still the same.

"... Nui?" Hoomaru asks surprised.

"So! What's my favorite human up to, and more importantly, how are you doing?!" Nui asks curiously, looking at Hoomaru with huge eyes and a big smile.

"Well... I'm fine, I suppose. That is... a surprising coincidence, seeing you here."

"Oh? Well, Hoomaru! Is Lady Ragyo here? I need to talk to her!" Nui mentions and walks up the stairs. Hoomaru's pulse rises, and she quickly stands up to catch up with Nui. Nui won't harm her, she knows that, except for delivering some insulting jokes and sentences. Nui slams open the door of the presidential office.

"Lady Ragyo!!!!!!, I'm heeereeee!" Nui says happily and looks around.

Lady Ragyo is gone. And the office itself is pretty much empty too. All the pictures of her that hung on the walls are gone. All that is left is the desk, the chair at it, a chair at the huge window wall that gives a great overview of Tokyo and a few flowers. Nui is confused.

"Lady Ragyo?" she asks. Hoomaru doesn't say a single word. Nui looks at Hoomaru, worried, and opens the door to her room. The

room is completely empty. Not a single piece of furniture is left. Nui slowly turns her head back to Hoomaru. She watches Hoomaru carefully. Hoomaru tries to say something, but she just looks down with her head. The young woman hesitates at first.

"... Lady Ragyo is dead." Hoomaru says cold.

"... what?"

"Lady Ragyo committed suicide after Ryuko Matoi... *inhales*... after Ryuko Matoi destroyed Shinra Koketsu." Hoomaru explains and exhales. Nui looks at Hoomaru in disbelief. Hoomaru wouldn't lie to Nui, at least that's what Nui believes. Hoomaru has too much respect towards Nui for that, and she probably is also scared a bit. She looks at Nui slightly worried. It's obvious that, while she is not scared, she definitely feels uncomfortable having Nui around here, especially after saying that her "mother" has died and Shinra Koketsu has been destroyed - which was meant to be Nui's masterpiece. Something indestructible, so powerful nothing can stop it. Not even a stupid woman with a Kamui. Nui slowly walks to the desk, touching the cold surface with her equally cold hands. After that, she slowly walks to the window walls, looking down.

"... which day is it, Hoomaru?" Nui asks calm, but Hoomaru can hear how heavy those words are to speak for the former Grand Couturier. Nui is not sad or anything, it's more of an extremely disappointed feeling. Undoubtedly uncomfortable at the very least, as Nui does not know how to comprehend feelings and emotions, or if she does, she never really learned it.

"... today is the 23rd of November, 2030." Hoomaru answers. Nui looks at her eye patch she took with her. She holds it tight, then inhales and exhales with her nose, and then she puts the eye patch back into the pocket.

"Five years?"

"Five years, yes. I'm sorry, Nui." Hoomaru answers. Nui reacts with a smile.

"Oh... of course you are. That makes me the CEO of REVOCS then." Nui grins.

"No."

Nui turns around, looking at Hoomaru with huge eyes. What did she just say?

"Since you were considered dead, you of course couldn't have become heir of REVOCS, which is why Satsuki Kiryuin is the new CEO."

"Kiryuin..." she mumbles.

"... and Matoi is alive too?"

"Yes. Both of them are still alive. They offered me to capitulate. I accepted the offer. If I didn't, they probably would have killed me too. Trust me... I did what I could to avenge Lady Ragyo and you." Hoomaru explains, but Nui does not care.

"Shinra Koketsu... Matoi destroyed Shinra Koketsu..." she mumbles and has to giggle a bit in disbelief. It sounds so stupid for Nui she can only laugh about it. And that she does.

"MATOI DESTROYED SHINRA KOKETSU!?" Nui screams angry, and then, all of a sudden, she just smiles again.

"Yes, she... she..."

"What is wrong, Hoomaru, you seem scared. We both are alone now. No REVOCS. No COVERS. Just me and my best human friend!" Nui grins. Hoomaru smiles back and nods, although it's not really serious of course. She's just playing along.

"Yes. Just you and me." Hoomaru answers so that Nui doesn't do anything stupid.

"... so, Nui. What's your plan. What are you going to do?" she continues to ask, seemingly loyal to Nui's unknown cause.

"Oh, we have to talk about a lot, my dear, but FIRST, I need a bath, something to eat AND my clothes!" Nui mentions and walks to her quarter just to see it's almost empty too.

"Well... there are still one or two of your dresses left in the warehouse, but regarding food and a bath... oh well, we will find something for you."

"Of course we will, love." Nui answers. Hoomaru and Nui walk back to Hoomaru's office. While Nui enters the elevator, Hoomaru writes a quick note and puts it onto her desk, then turning off the computer. The secretary then enters the elevator with Nui. She does not know what to think of Nui's return, but what she does know is her trying to find a way to calm Nui down and not do anything stupid. All in good time is what she thinks. First of all she wants to calm Nui a bit down to get her at least a tad more kinder and friendly, although friendly is a word that is pretty relative regarding Nui, and then she will continue with her plans. Handling Nui is dangerous as she is almost unpredictable, but luckily she has some experience with her already. She won't give up what Satsuki gave her. Not in a million years.

Around 6:10 PM, Ryuko is back at home in her mansion, preparing for the fun evening with Satsuki. It's snowy outside, and it got dark already. It's cold outside, but she's well protected in the living room and so she enjoys the few minutes that are left in her building before going to the trainyard to travel to Tokyo. Right now she puts on a nice red vest and a white shirt - such pretty clothes is something she usually wouldn't wear but she also can't deny the appeal. She still prefers usual stuff like hoodies, but since Satsuki invited her, she tries to make her happy by wearing noble and expensive stuff. Satsuki likes that. With a thick winter jacket she can take the train that arrives in 15 minutes - plenty of time to still get prepared as the

trainyard isn't far away. She just drives to it with her motorcycle. It's totally alright for her to use it to pass short distances but when it comes to driving to Kisarazu, she uses the bus as it's dangerous for her and the other street participants. The Life Fiber sickness might not sound like much, but it does make peoples live worse. She's glad that she can endure it a bit better than others which is why she isn't too tired to work. The TV is still on while she puts on her clothes.

"... after almost 100 years after the second world war, increased terroristic attacks in the german empire have been noticed. Third message: A few days ago, a mysterious unknown flying object, an UFO, has been seen near the infamous Honnouji-Academy - the place where the terror realm of the former REVOCS corporation under Ragyo Kiryuin found an end. However, the object appears to be nothing more than a usual little rock. There is no reason to be afraid. This is the automatic news system of the prefecture of Chiba. We wish you a good evening." Ryuko can hear from the TV.

"UFO. Right." Ryuko mumbles and rolls with her eyes. She quickly walks to the kitchen to drink her glass of water. Then she turns off the TV. The moment she turns it off, she can see something crawling up the window. However, she doesn't care about it, as it seems to be nothing interesting, and besides, she can't really see what it is anyway. Maybe just some sort of weird rat or animal that lost it's way over their. After turning out the lights in the house, she walks back to the living room to turn it's lights off too, but as she takes a second look at the window, she see's more clearly that something crawls up.

It's life fibers. Ryuko looks confused and stays in the room for a few seconds, watching how there are actual life fibers crawling up the window wall of her room. Her mouth slowly opens in disbelief and she does not understand what the hell is going on here. Except for the rather quiet crawling of the fibers, she can't hear anything else... wait, there is something else. Footsteps. The fibers start glowing red, and then, the windows explode! Red smoke rises, and the glass shards fly into Ryukos direction. The sheer strength of the fiber explosion hurls her away and slams her into the wall behind her. She

coughs, since the smoke is strong. The living room is barely visible for her. But the steps are getting louder and louder, until they find a hard ground. A silhouette appears in the smoke. Ryuko slowly crawls back, and as the smoke lifts, she finally see's who seems to be responsible for this chaos.

"Ryuko Matoi." the young man who Nui called Ichiro says. Calm, but with a slight smile, trimming his cute pink bowtie on his head.

"Ah... fuck." she quietly mumbles and stands up.

"I've been waiting for this for quite some time. It's truly interesting to see you with own eyes."

"And who are you, you stupid asshole?" Ryuko asks angry. Thanks to her life fiber body, she is able to form blade like arms.

"... they did tell me you are not kind, but why's that?"

"I don't know, I'm not the one who destroys living rooms here." Ryuko counters. Ichiro smiles.

"No, but you do things the Life fibers do not like. A hybrid like you should be attracted to both humans and life fibers, don't you think?"

"If it counts as attracted when I kick your ass then I'm sure as hell am attracted!" she screams and attacks Ichiro. Ichiro easily dodges every single attack. Then he attacks Ryuko with his fist, hitting her face. Ryuko gets slammed against the bar of the kitchen, and a bit of blood spreads, as she sustains a slight wound on the back of her head. It hurts, but it could have ended worse. With his right arm he points at Ryuko, and Life fibers spread out from outside, trying to attack her. Ryuko punches them away and stands up. She attacks Ichiro a second time, forming her arms into blades, but she is not able to deal a hit. However, Ichiro grabs her left arm, slowly crushing it. Ryuko screams in pain, and blood floods. A pretty bad and ugly wound appears. Then he pushes Ryuko away. Ryuko falls down on

her back, seeing the wound that does not regenerate for some reason. She is shocked.

"How is this possible?!"

"I wouldn't do that, Matoi. I need you alive." Ichiro smiles. Ryuko stands up and takes some distance from Ichiro. They both slowly walk around in a circle, but Ichiro seemingly enjoys Ryuko's view. He also likes that Ryuko apparently does not know what she should do now.

"You remind me of that asshole that killed my dad." Ryuko mentions angrily. Ichiro shrugs with his shoulders and smiles while looking into her eyes. Ryuko does not like this look at all, but she does find a chance to escape. She uses the chance and runs into the garden, where life fibers are awaiting her. They jump at her, but Ryuko can dodge in the last second. More and more fibers spread out to follow Ryuko, and only with a lot of effort she is able to flee out of her mansion. Ichiro giggles a bit and follows her. Every last fiber follows him.

Arriving in the dark forest behind the mansion, Ryuko shortly peeks out and sees Ichiro walking into her direction, but thanks to the bad light conditions, he apparently didn't see her. She quickly plans what she wants to do now. The blood that spreads out of her wound tells Ichiro where she is since it lays in the snow. Confused, Ryuko runs through the forest, thinking about what to do next, and quick. Without a weapon she is not able to properly defend herself apparently, and the time is running. Then she reminds herself that her train is departing in a few minutes, and so she decides to run to the trainyard through the forest. While running, she hears the life fibers crawling, and Ichiro's footsteps. She tries to hide her footsteps by hurling up snow, but it only works partially since the blood still is a huge problem. As Ichiro comes closer, she hides behind a tree.

"Matoiiii..." he slowly whispers calmly. Carefully peeking out of the tree, she sees Ichiro walking around, with life fibers following him. Some of them split up to search Ryuko.

"Fuck." she mumbles quietly to herself and waits. The snow fall got stronger, and the sight becomes even worse than it already is. She is unbelievably cold and shivers. After a few seconds, Ryuko gains distance to Ichiro, and she quietly sneaks away from the tree. Treetops are making noises thanks to the fibers and the snow. Ichiro turns around, seeing Ryuko's foot disappearing behind a bush.

"You play Hide and seek like someone else before you." Ichiro mentions and walks towards Ryuko's direction. The steps are getting louder, and all of a sudden, Ryuko's hair is pulled.

"Found you." he grins. Ryuko hits his torso with her fist, but he does not care at all. She looks deeply into his face. He looks awfully similar to Nui Harime.

"Who the fuck are you!?"

"How impatient." he mentions and launches Ryuko into a tree a few meters away. Ryuko moans of pain, and when she stands up she sees Ichiro coming closer. He removes the snow that fell onto his shoulder with one hand.

Ryuko starts running even though her back, head and arm pains badly. She breathes for air and runs faster. Life fibers follow her. As fast as she can she runs through the forest, and the wind howls. With one hand she holds the wound on her arm and does not even think about looking back. All she wants is to run away from this powerful enemy. Ichiro however is as fast as she is by liquifying his body to crawl over the ground.

"WHAT KIND OF CRAZY IDIOT IS THIS GUY!?" she screams scared and sprints. She can't run any faster. Life fibers catch up with her and jump onto her legs. Ryuko falls down with her face into the snow and the wound. The wound burns badly. The life fibers drag Ryuko to Ichiro who turns back into a human, looking satisfied at Ryuko.

"Always running away, always escaping." he mumbles. Ryuko kicks Ichiro's legs which make him walk back a few steps, and when she stands up, she continues running, but the train starts driving away.

"ARE YOU KIDDING ME!?" she screams and runs to the train. The train briefly drives through a short part of the forest until it drives down a huge plateau near to the highway. Ichiro follows Ryuko. Ryuko sees how the train slowly drives down the plateau, and the only way of reaching the train in time is by running onto the highway and then jumping it down so she can land on the roof of the train before it disappears. No matter how crazy this idea sounds like for Ryuko, it might be her only way out of this situation. Stressed, she runs out of the forest and onto the highway, where cars are driving, and quick too. Luckily, Ichiro does not know anything about this train and only hears its sounds. From the highway itself the train is not visible anyway, you'd have to look down at the safety fences to see the train properly. While the train comes closer, Ryuko turns around and sees Ichiro slowly walking on the highway. The cars stopped moving and make noises, hoping that both Ryuko and Ichiro would leave the highway.

"There is no escape, Matoi." he smiles, moving his finger slowly from left to right a few times. He slowly moves to Ryuko. Ryuko stays at the safety fences. The train becomes louder and louder. She looks behind her and sees the train is almost here. Ichiro however spreads his arms to his left and right, as if he would like to welcome or hug Ryuko.

"Follow me, Matoi. Nothing will happen if you do, I promise." he claims. The young woman looks at Ichiro in distrust, and she lets her hand off her wound.

"You'll pay for my house, you asshole." she says angry and sees how the train arrives. A few more seconds and she has a chance to jump.

"You truly are unfriendly, my love."

"Love? Come on, tell me your name so I know exactly who I can engrave an "Ryuko kicked your balls!"" she screams angry. Ichiro giggles.

"My name is Ichiro. Ichiro Harime. Pleased to meet you, sweetheart." he answers. This sentence shocks Ryuko, and her eyes are getting bigger.

"... impossible." she mumbles. The train is extremely loud, and she notices she has to jump now. Ryuko jumps down. Ichiro runs to the safety fence but he can only see how Ryuko drives away on the roof of the train.

"Hm." he grumbles unimpressed. Civilians walk towards him.

"What the fuck is wrong with you? Get off the streets!" one of the civilians scream to him. Four civilians watch him, and more cars are not in sight at the moment. He rolls his eyes.

"Kill them. We'll go back to the mansion." Ichiro orders his life fibers. The life fibers jump onto the civilians and attack them, killing them quick and clean. The corpses slowly mutate into new fibers, and what was once left of an human disappears, as if no one human was ever there. Then there fibers follow their master back into the woods.

Ryuko crawls wounded on the roof of the train, slowly moving to one of the waggons. Carefully climbing down the roof, she enters one of the waggons by force. The wagon is warm, well enlightened and quiet. The light however blinds in the first moment. Ryuko gets used to it rather quick though and walks up the stairs to the upper floor of the waggon. She still bleeds and her shirt is ruined. The wounded woman sits onto a seat for four people and leans back into the seat, in and exhaling, taking a better look at the wound. Ichiro's sheer strength fatally wounded her arm. For a normal human, the arm would have no use anymore, but luckily, she is a hybrid, and therefore the wound will regenerate, although it will take a few hours up to a day or two. She does not complain though, it's better than losing the arm entirely. She covers the wound up but blood still flows

out, at least a bit. Ryuko tries to calm down a bit to process what happened.

Ichiro Harime... is that some kind of brother? She doesn't know it and right now she isn't really in the mood to know it anyway. She just wants to get to her sister to tell her what just happened. The evening is probably ruined. A few hours of travelling with the train passes. Ryuko doesn't take a look outside, and she feels tired too. While driving to Tokyo, Ichiro went back to the Matoi-Mansion, looking around. His life fibers crawl through the place, searching for useful stuff. Ichiro himself also takes a closer look. With a special communication system, the life fibers can talk to each other without actually using words and vocals. He finds images of Ryuko and Satsuki, notebooks, but nothing really interesting. Then he can hear Ryukos smartphone in her living room, and he calmly walks back to it. There, he notices besides the phone a ticket for a train. It's a two ways ticket for Tokyo and back to Chiba. Satsuki is calling Ryuko. Ichiro waits until the call ends.

"Tokyo main trainyard..." he reads quietly. A message appears shortly after on Ryukos phone.

"Are you on your way to my apartment already, Ryuko?" Satsuki wrote. He connects both pieces and then smiles.

"So you want to visit Tokyo, Matoi? Good... me too..."

The Nightmare That Never Ended

The sun slowly goes down. Boats cruise over the ocean of the Bay of Tokyo. In the background, the noises of the sinking Honnouji-Academy are audible. The huge fortress like building slowly sinks down, until nothing is left of it. The boats split up.

"So, Mako! What's the plan? Where are we heading?" Ryuko asks her friend Mako with a slight smile.

"Mum and Dad say that we go to Mie! We lived there years ago, but back then I was super small!"

"Huh, cooleo." Ryuko answers. Mako nods and smiles, then she jumps onto a little chair on top of the boat. Ryuko follows her and sits down as well. They enjoy watching the sun slowly go down. Ryuko smiles a bit as the sun reminds her of Senketsu. Time to let the past go.

Days pass. Ryuko's new family travels a while through the various prefectures of Japan. Mountains, Rivers, huge cities... these are things they see throughout their journey to the prefecture of Mie. What makes Mie so special is the city of Ise, which contains the holiest Shinto-Buddhism shrine of Japan. After all this time, Ryuko finally found a family that might be a bit weird but even kinder. She feels welcome in the Mankanshoku family, and that's the important thing. And then there's always Satsuki and her friends that will support her whenever she needs help. Satsuki travels to Tokyo to reluctantly accept her heritage as new head of the REVOCS corporation. Removing REVOCS from the entire world would be a task that would take hundreds of years to finish and even then, nearly impossible, as it would increase the unemployment rate in the entire world. And besides, it would start a hunt onto Satsuki thanks to her decision, not to mention the dozens of factories that will be rendered inactive.

After about two weeks, the Mankanshoku family finally arrives the little village in Mie - located in a beautiful valley, and a forest around it. It does appear lonely, but on the other hand very idyllic and quiet, and if you want to buy stuff like food or just want to have some fun and entertainment, you can take the highway to the next city. With bicycles, visiting that city only takes about one hour - might sound like a lot, but the advantage is a nature that is not harmed, which is important for a prefecture like this. And besides - the world more or less is so full of urban areas, there really isn't much nature left thanks to the gigantic industries of companies, and this includes not just REVOCS. However, the home of the Mankanshokus is pretty much ruined after this long journey, and so the family gains help from other villagers in order to build a new proper home. Building this house takes days and everyone, even their pet Guts has to help. Well, Guts catches little wood planks and delivers them to the others. One day, Ryuko and Mako sit on the roof, working on it.

"Phew... pretty exhausting." Ryuko mentions and wipes off the sweat drops from her head. Mako giggles.

"But it's fun!"

"Yeah, that's true. By the way, did Gamagoori called you already?" Ryuko asks curious.

"Oh! Yes, he did! He asked me if I had time to eat something with him next week!" she smiles happily. Ryuko laughs.

"For real now?"

"YES! I hope they have croquettes!"

"What kind of restaurant do you guys visit?"

"It's a SUSHI BAR!" she says and smiles happily. Ryuko raises her eyebrows.

"... I don't think they do..."

"YOU THINK THEY MAKE CROQUETTES OUT OF FISH?!"

"... I..."

"MUM! I HAVE A GREAT IDEA FOR SUPPER!" Mako screams to her mother Sukuyo. Ryuko swallows.

"Oh boy..." she mumbles.

After a few hours, they both slowly lack of wood planks for the roof of the house. Ryuko decides to climb down. She walks to the small ware house in the village to get some new planks. Thanks to her life fiber body she can carry more than other humans. The villagers don't know of her being Life fiber and so they just think Ryuko is a pretty strong woman. Especially some of the young men and women are impressed of Ryuko, which kind of makes her proud. There weren't a lot of people who thought that Ryuko is cool. In fact, she was mostly just seen as a weirdo, and the many fights she had during her time in school as well as being bullied didn't help either. She's still wondering what happened to the old gang she was in back then, and how her old home at the Ox Elementary school looks like. Or if it even exists. Walking out of the ware house with a pile of planks on her shoulders, she goes back to the house of the Mankanshokus. But then, all of a sudden, everything goes dark. Red life fibers appear in the shadows, slowly enlightening the darkness in red colors. Ryuko drops the planks, and then, she can hear someone giggling in the background. The young woman turns around and sees Nui Harime approaching her, slowly, with black arms and both parts of the Scissor blade. She smiles evil, looking at Ryuko.

"What a beautiful little house you are building, Ryuko!"

"You again." Ryuko answers and bites her teeth together. Nui plays around with the blades a little bit.

"Be honest, you love to see me. Seeing me always reminds you of how you might have a chance of avenging your stupid dead daddy." Nui smiles.

"Shut up before I'll make you regret it."

"Ooooooh, I'm so scared. You saved your little world but not your daddy, well, how unfortunate. Must be pretty tough to know that, hmmm?" Nui provokes. Ryuko slowly walks towards Nui, angry, and exhausted from seeing her. She stands right before Nui, head to head. Nui's smile is huge.

"Get the fuck out of my head, Harime. You're dead. And you'll stay dead." Ryuko says unwavering. Life fibers slowly crawl to Ryuko, making her unable to move. She is not able to defend herself. Nui proceeds to hold both parts of the scissor blade between her and Ryuko's head. Closing the blades would decapitate both of them.

"You always say that as if it would be something bad. *Sigh*... I wish you would be dead too. We could have so much fun together. Don't forget, Ryuko: Love and hate are two sides of the same coin." Nui giggles and slowly closes the blades. Blood flows out of Nui's neck as it slowly cuts open, and as Nui's neck is half cut, the blades start to make Ryuko bleed as well. Nui grins throughout the process.

"Stop it!" Ryuko screams angry. Nui giggles.

"Are you scared, Ryuko?" Nui asks curious. Ryuko doesn't answer.

"Look at you... always so brave but now you're scared. You are cute." Nui says and closes the blades. Her head falls off, with a smile in her face, and shortly after, Ryuko's head starts bleeding even badlier. The blades cut through her neck, and as she is about to lose her head, she suddenly hears someone talking.

"Hey! Wake up, Miss Matoi." a conductor says. Ryuko looks around, confused and unsure what just happened. Her heart beats fast.

"Who, what... where... ah fuck..." she mumbles exhausted. It was a nightmare.

"I always forget that you have the Life fiber sickness. Anyway: are we visiting Tokyo again?" the conductor asks curiously. He notices the wound on Ryukos arm.

"Ah... uh, yeah, where else should I go, hehe." she answers grinning and clears her throat.

"You do have a bad wound on you arm. I can bring you some bandages if you'd like." the man suggests.

"Oh uh, nah it's fine, I... I can heal my wounds fairly quick, I'm a pretty healthy person, you know." she grins unsure. The conductor slowly nods in disbelief.

"Well if you say so... now, can I see your ticket, please?" the man continues to ask. Ryuko thinks briefly and puts her hand into her pockets, but she notices quickly her ticket is not with her.

"Ah, shit."

"This happens on a regular base, Miss Matoi."

"Yes, I know, I know..." Ryuko answers and sighs. The man shakes his head annoyed.

"Well, I'll make sure Miss Kiryuin gets a message. Like always."

"Mhm." Ryuko grumbles. The conductor moves on, while Ryuko leans back into her seat, looking out of the window of the train. The train is pretty modern and has a slight Science fiction flair. The closer the train gets to Tokyo, the more walls are visible. While the area around Tokyo is more or less idyllic, even though it basically is only a lot of farms, the city itself is the very definition of an urban area. Stores, houses, skyscrapers, government buildings: it doesn't matter which direction you look at, there's always something made out of concrete. There are walls on the monorails partially so that no anarchist or criminal starts vandalizing or even saobtage the rail system, because that happened a few times already. That's why you

can't really enjoy the look at the few but beautiful attractions of Tokyo. The lights on the walls are bright and enlighten the tunnel like rails. After about twenty more minutes, the train arrives at the main trainyard of Tokyo. Ryuko stands up and moves to the entrance of the waggon. People are everywhere, but this quickly changes as she leaves the train and walks down the stairs of the, on a huge bridge built trainyard. With every step she walks down, the poverty gets more and more visible. Steam rises from the alleys, yellow lights enlighten the darkness, and homeless or drunk people walk through the street. This city surely has seen far better times before the second World War and the first battle against the life fibers. Luckily for her, Satsuki's apartment isn't far away from the trainyard, and so she walks to it quickly, and stressed.

People watch Ryuko as the clothes she wears are noble compared to the ones the normal citizens wear. With her winter jacket she could have been able to hide these clothes, but this makes things far difficult for her, and it's still cold. At the very least, snow doesn't fall anymore. The only thing that relieves her is the fact that almost no one knows how Ryuko Matoi looks like. People do know she is second in command regarding REVOCS, but she never went into public. Satsuki is the face of REVOCS, not Ryuko. She also notices that she doesn't have her phone with her. Cars drive through the streets, citizens push each other away, and so, Ryuko does the same, because time is running and she does not know if Ichiro was able to follow her. It's important to tell Satsuki as soon as possible what happened so that they both can plan their next move. There is something like a cold war happening on the streets. Almost everyone hates each other, but no one openly admits it, but pushing and sometimes kicking away other people to get to the target is nothing unusual here, and in fact, almost something like a rule. And the police here doesn't really intervene.

Arriving at the plaza of Tokyo, a weird contrast is visible. People are partying here into the night and seem to have a lot of fun. Violence is nothing new around here either, but apparently the party people don't mind that too much as long as there is enough alcohol and drugs.

It's another indicator for how crazy this world has gone after the end of Ragyo's reign. Back then, it was different. Life fibers were evil, yes, but people were also more civilized as everyone had the same stylish clothes, which made a class system less obvious unlike today. Today it's completely different sadly.

Eventually, Ryuko arrives at the skyscraper in which Satsuki lives and opens the door quickly. She walks to the elevator and starts it. Her wound isn't bleeding anymore, but it still burns like hell. Via the elevator she arrives in the 22th floor and knocks onto her door. The door opens and Satsuki appears, looking confused at Ryuko. Then, Satsuki notices the wound.

"Ryuko, what..." and now Ryuko hugs Satsuki. Satsuki kept her short hair.

"Satsuki... man, I'm so glad to see you." she mumbles relieved. Satsuki hugs Ryuko a bit more until they both walk to the living room.

"You look horrible. What happened, sister? And what is it about this wound?"

"We have to talk, Satsuki, we got a huge fucking problem." Ryuko says.

At the same time at a different location in Tokyo...

"mjam* "Wow, Hoomaru! This restaurant surely is not as bad as the others in this ugly town!" Nui grins, disguised as her Alter Ego Shinjiro Nagita. Hoomaru nods and clears her throat. Nui has a huge plate with various kinds of fish and some salad. She likes to eat fish, but only the noble and expensive one. Something as perfect as Nui, at least that's what she believes, only of course want's the best. Hoomaru is not hungry, and she can't be blamed for that either. If all of a sudden someone appears that you thought of had died, and then it's someone that treated you rather poorly and now expects you to help... well, everyone wouldn't be hungry then. Nui enjoys eating the food.

"So... Nui. You got your eye back, that is very... pleasant to see, I assume." Hoomaru says. Nui nods smiling. She seems to feel better than before now, thanks to the bath she had a few hours ago.

"Now, Hoomaru, my dear. Tell me what happened while I was busy being dead." Nui says.

"Hm, well... Satsuki took over REVOCS and I'm allowed to work for her, but other than that, people walk around with cheap clothes which honestly annoys me... but other than that there's nothing interesting, at least not for you." Hoomaru explains. Nui continues to eat.

"What are we going to do now? How should we continue Lady Ragyo's plan?" she asks. Hoomaru doesn't like asking this. Even though some of Ragyo's ideals shine through her until today, she is convinced about Satsuki's ambitions being rightful.

"Lady Ragyo's plans have to wait!"

"What?"

"Hoomaru, you and me, we have a problem. There is a cool guy who can use cool powers to make cool things with them, BUT: I hate him. So that's why he has to die. Once he is dead, we can deal with the other douchebags." Nui explains. Hoomaru raises her eyebrows confused.

"And who would that be?"

"Oh, you know... his name is Ichiro Harime, pretty cute little boy, sadly a buffoon, nothing concerning." she smiles.

"Well, that shouldn't be a problem for you then, right? I mean... you are far stronger than all the other fools we met so far."

"Oh... well, this fool is stronger than me, and I hate that. We need to be smart and we need weapons! Is the old fiber factory still intact?"

"You mean the old one we used for experiments, the one in Nara at the Ômine mountain? Yeah, I think it was never cleared. At the very least, Satsuki never ordered that, but she probably didn't knew about it."

"Great! Then we should visit it as soon as possible!" Nui says happily.

"As soon as possible? Shouldn't I tell Satsuki that'll be gone for a while?"

"Pff, nah. Satsuki is a stupid cow." Nui grins. Hoomaru has to genuinely giggle briefly before she gets herself together again.

"As you wish, Nui." Hoomaru answers. Nui cleans her mouth and smiles. Seems like she is satisfied. Shortly after, a waiter arrives and takes the plate with him. They both stand up and walk outside, arriving at the plaza of Tokyo - a lot is going on here right now, as Ryuko already saw a few minutes ago, and the night life is starting. It's 9 PM right now. The plaza is a few kilometers away from the REVOCS industrial area. Satsukis Apartment is visible here, but luckily, Nui doesn't know where she lives.

"This was by far the less worst restaurant I've ate at." Nui laughs. Hoomaru nods smiling. Recent songs are audible in the background. The music is loud and annoying, and the slight steam that leaves the alleys and streets makes staying not exactly an enjoyable time.

"Bet you were pretty hungry." Hoomaru mentions.

"Ooooooh you can't imagine how hungry."

"Can we please leave the streets, Harime? It's disgusting here." Hoomaru suggests. Nui nods and walks off the street with Hoomaru, arriving at a uber parking spot.

"So, to Nara?" Hoomaru asks.

"Yes!"

"Good. But we should go tomorrow. Tokyo is pretty lively at this moment. Taking a uber will take about three hours until we actually get out of the city, and I doubt you want to sit in the car the entire night?"

"Nope."

"Then we should go to my apartment, I guess...?"

"Yes!" Nui answers. Hoomaru nods and inhales, then exhales to let off some stress.

"Soroi, I hope you saw the note." Hoomaru thinks...

"ARGH, FUCK!" Ryuko gripes painful.

"Hold still." Satsuki says, bandaging Ryukos wound, which she does rather well, even though Ryuko does this on a more or less involuntarily base, fidgeting around. But now that Satsuki is done, the wound does feel better now, and she appears more relieved.

"Thanks, Sis." Ryuko says grateful.

"No problem. So. This "Ichiro" seems to be pretty powerful if he can almost break your arm without using a weapon that can cut life fibers." Satsuki mentions unimpressed. Ryuko nods.

"Well I wasn't in the mood to find out how much more powerful he really is. But this is clear so far: his name's Harime, he looks like Harime, he is strong, he has a bad taste of fashion and he is an ass."

"I don't doubt that."

"... well, sorry for ruining the evening, I didn't thought a douchebag like him would just appear out of nowhere."

"Of course, Ryuko, it's totally fine. You are here and safe now. He probably doesn't even know where you are right now. The worst thing he could know is that you've went to Tokyo thanks to the ticket you forgot at home, but luckily Tokyo is a gigantic city and full of idiots." Satsuki mentions and yawns briefly.

"I guess. Well, this was all more exhausting than expected." says Satsuki and smiles.

"Heh, yeah. Now what?"

"Now we are going to watch a movie. Going to the cinema won't work anymore but that doesn't mean we couldn't have some fun and watch a movie or two here. That's why I always have some snacks in the kitchen. We'll see what we do tomorrow. It's probably best if we talk with Mikisugi and ask for some help." Satsuki suggests and gives Ryuko a glass of water which she drinks.

"Sounds good. Better than nothing."

"Yes."

"And what's with REVOCS?"

"Honestly... REVOCS couldn't interested me less at the moment. Besides, our new friend won't be able to achieve power about this symbol of shame as he has to make himself the owner of it. And I do not know how he should do that. Besides, Houka will notice it when something happens."

"Ah. Fair enough." Ryuko answers. Satsuki walks into the kitchen, opening a closet while Ryuko takes off her red vest to that the shirt she wears feels more comfortable. Then she leans back into the couch and relaxes a bit. Shortly after, Satsuki appears out of the kitchen with some tasty snacks. They both start watching a fun action movie, and the atmosphere is good, even though a crazy psychopath just tried to kill Ryuko. And the warm living room makes everything even more comfortable. They both sit on the couch,

having some blankets while munching a few crisps and chocolate bars. Around 11 PM, they both agree that it's late and that it's time to sleep. Ryuko and Satsuki sleep in the same room since it's huge enough for it. The big sister also gets a nice and huge mattress and lays it down, putting some sheets onto it and a warm blanket. Before going to bed, they talk a little bit, but they are already in their beds. Ryuko wears a red pyjama, Satsuki a blue one.

"... oh, Mankanshoku is fine according to Gamagoori. He sometimes visits her." Satsuki mentions.

"That's good. Your friend always watches over her, hm?" Ryuko notices and smiles. She lays her head onto the pillow and then she looks up to the ceiling. It's quiet for a short while. Satsuki watches the window. On the left side of the door, Satsuki lies in her huge, white colored bed with blue blanket and mattress. About six meters in front of the bed is a huge window wall, and in the left corner of the room are a few closets with clothes and a little shelf with books. Ryuko is in the upper right corner of the room, lying at the window wall, which is why she has a great view onto the city if she decides to look out.

"Kinda relaxing, seeing all those people walking around down there, barely hearing them. They look like ants."

"Hm, you'll get used to it though. These people don't have any respect. I experience this bad behaviour every time I am forced to walk the streets of this cursed city."

"Mhm. You still don't wanna move to Chiba?"

"Not yet, no. Once Houka and I are done with REVOCS, I'll consider it surely. I can't and wont lead an organisation like this. Every once in a while I think my ambitions were destined to never be fulfilled. The oath I swore was never fulfilled."

"Don't be too harsh on you. We both couldn't have known shit would go south after Ragyo's death. And honestly... this is still better than

fighting day for day against some crazy aliens made out of clothes, right?" Ryuko giggles. Satsuki grumbles a bit.

"This mistake should have never happened." Satsuki answers annoyed. Ryuko does not answer. She doesn't know what to answer anyway.

"Well, anyway. It's time to sleep." Ryuko suggests and lies down a bit more comfortable. Satsuki nods and turns off the lights of the room.

"Good night, Ryuko."

"Good night, Satsuki." Ryuko says. Ryuko takes a look out of the window. As ugly as Tokyo is if you take a closer look - from up here, it looks pretty interesting, especially in the night and when people are partying thanks to the bright and various colours. She slowly starts to sleep although she has headaches, as she is thinking about Senketsu the entire time. Would the battle have had a different result if Senketsu would have been there...?

Sometime later during the night.

COVERS soldiers move through some kind of underground tunnel system on the same level the sewers of Tokyo are located. Homeless people sleep here. It's unbelievably cold and uncomfortable here, but surely better than staying out in the open and dealing with the snow, the cold temperature and the citizens of Tokyo. This place undoubtedly had been built in secret a while ago, but the question is, who built it and why. In any case, via an overpass, the four COVERS soldiers find themselves back on the other side of the sewers. They open a door that leads to a huge platform like elevator, with enough space for up to forty people and wares to transport. This elevator leads into the so called "Lower City" of Tokyo.

The lower city of Tokyo is a huge abandoned complex seemingly built by the government for homeless and poor people. This is their "home." Here, the people dislike everyone, and no one trusts each

other, and the people who are in charge use their power over the poor people for their own advantage - especially the COVERS sympathizers. No one dares to confront them. Small huts built out of metal, plywood and concrete hang on the walls and various floors of the lower city. There are probably more districts and not just this one as one might assume thanks to Tokyo's size and the signs at the entrance next to the elevator that say "District 3." Without doubt, this is an immensely ugly place no one really wants to live in. There is almost no daylight - maybe a few little rays that shine through every once in a while, but other than that, the only light sources come from the lamps and headlights in and above the lower city. There is barely enough electricity for everyone who lives here as well. The COVERS soldiers move through the main part of the city, pushing homeless and poor people away to get to their headquarter. The headquarter is located at the other end of the city, and reaching it takes some time thanks to the labyrinth like structure of the city, with stairs and concrete ladders everywhere.

After a few minutes, the soldiers eventually arrive at the headquarter and step into it. The follower of Ragyo Kiryuin wear light armor, supposedly made out of life fiber, but of course this is a huge lie. The clothes they wear does not even work as armor at all, but the people down here are so poor educated and lost that they would believe everything. These COVERS sympathizers gain new recruits this way. Poor people find a purpose in live by joining the COVERS forces - for the righteous cause, as clothing is the original sin. At least that's what they are told. Everything appears to be like a swamp, but an urban one.

The group of soldiers arrive in the room of the leader - a room that is equally ruined and dirty, but banners of REVOCS hang around. Blueprints of COVERS can be found too, hanging on a blackboard, but every attempt on recreating one has failed obviously. What surprises is that the leader of this bunch of COVERS followers is just a young man, about twenty years old, with glasses, short brown hair and a pretty much innocent face. To be more precise, he is the only

one who really does not belong here according to his appearance, but on the other hand, people listen to him. How is this possible?

"Masaru Yamamoto. We've came back. The assault on the clothing factory of Tokugawa-Corps was a success, however, two of our team members died." one of the soldiers mentions and takes off his dirty looking helmet. The young man with the glasses who seems to be Masaru nods and thinks.

"Fine... hm... well, we have to be more strategic and careful now. Thanks to our good friend Hirata it is possible that we might be able to find a deal with REVOCS. If we can get Miss Kiryuin to make a deal with us, it might be possible to take her out for good and take over the control of REVOCS by ourselves. It shouldn't be too much of a problem dealing with that Matoi woman either." Masaru answers. He wears a brown jacket and trousers. He does not even sound dangerous. One of the soldiers, Hirata apparently, takes a few steps forward.

"Masaru is right. I will meet up with a man this week who seems to work for Satsuki Kiryuin. Unfortunately I don't know his name yet, however, I do think that it's possible we could..." Hirata explains and is interrupted by a second soldier who giggles and moves forward, shaking his head.

"You are really cute." the soldier says. The followers look at him confused.

"I wasn't even done yet. Why do you interrupt me?" Hirata asks. The man takes off his helmet. It's Ichiro Harime. He inhales and exhales briefly, then he smiles.

"A remarkably commitment for a cause you don't know anything about. I only know you "humans" for a few days and I'm already excited to see what kind of stupid stuff you will come up next. My predecessor certainly had a lot of fun with you."

"And you are?" Masaru asks worried. Ichiro disintegrates the cheap armor he wears and regenerates his usual outfit, the pink vest and the yellow trousers. It's obvious now that Ichiro is not a normal human. He trims his cute little tie on his head.

"The thing you seem to strive for." he answers and pats the head of a soldier.

"Br..." Ichiro says disgusted due to the feeling of the hair. He turns his head back to Masaru and walks around him.

"So you are the head of this "organisation" of funny little humans who seriously try to follow in the footsteps of the life fibers?" he asks curious and leans his head to Masaru. Masaru clears his throat worried.

"Let him alone." one of the soldiers say and aims with his weapon towards Ichiro. Ichiro grins and turns his head to the soldier. The other soldiers aim at Ichiro as well.

"You wouldn't shoot someone as perfect as me in the face, would you?"

"Let's see how perfect you are." the soldier says.

"Lovely." Ichiro answers and draws life fibers out of his hands. He starts attacking the five soldiers from which two were guarding the room, and the three he was walking with. Masaru sits there, shocked, as he sees how the life fibers Ichiro uses attack the soldiers, burning into them. The attack is too fast to react properly, and so they are not able to make a move and start shooting. While the five soldiers are slowly corrupted by the life fibers, two more soldiers enter the room, attacking Ichiro with melee weapons - a sword and a baseball bat. Ichiro turns his head around and smiles.

"AAAARRRGHHH!" they scream to scare Ichiro, but it's needless to say he is unimpressed. Ichiro reacts quickly with a brief giggle and forms his arm into a blade, effortlessly ripping off their necks. Blood

spreads, and the dying soldiers gurgle, trying to stay alive, and one of them looks at Ichiro in disbelief and hatred.

"Weakling." he says to the soldier and kicks his foot against the chin, decapitating the soldier, who's corpse falls to it's back. The soldiers that have been attacked by the life fibers Ichiro sent out are on the ground, dying in this very moment, as their skin slowly turns slightly red. After a few more seconds, everyone is dead and the fibers crawl back to Ichiro. He collects them and smiles at Masaru, who is scared.

"Now how is it possible that a young man like you is scared by death, and what is more important... how did it come that you are the one leading this bunch of weaklings?" Ichiro asks confused and looks at the corpses.

"I... well..." he stutters. Ichiro turns his head back to Masaru.

"Stay calm. Inhale... and exhale. You and me, we are on the same... wave length. Same ideals, same interestes, and certainly the same gruesome humor. You wouldn't cry about these "individuals", would you?" he asks.

"No, of course... not... they..." he stutters. Ichiro grins.

"So... a COVERS sympathizer and their leader as well."

"Yes... sir."

"Ah... and you would surely speed up the evolution of humanity the way it should have always been?"

"... well, let's say REVOCS gave me a purpose in life. I... I'm certainly not agreeing with everything REVOCS and Ragyo Kiryuin had in mind, but I... they needed a head of security and I knew a lot about programming and... uh..." Masaru says, unsure of what he should answer next.

"You seem scared. Do I scare you?"

Masaru does not answer.

"No one will harm you. Only I can." he smiles and laughs slightly.

"..."

"... your dear friend Hirata sadly has gone from us, what a shame, I know, but I'm certain you can be quite useful. You are weak, and a clown, but that's what I love about you humans... you all are equally worthless. But you know exactly you are, otherwise you wouldn't sit here, and that's what makes you... interesting."

"... so... you are real life fiber, yes?" Masaru asks cautious. Ichiro draws some life fiber out of his hands and shows it to Masaru.

"This... is true life fiber."

"... and you want to destroy this world just like Miss Kiryuin back then?" Masaru asks naive. Ichiro looks surprised. Then, he laughs.

"Destroy!? No! No, no, no! No... not this time."

"What... then?"

"You'll see. I expect far more from a leader, faaaaarr more, but I assume I have to lower my expectations when working with you humans. Now tell me a few things about you and REVOCS, because I'd love to visit it..."

The next morning

Hoomaru wakes up. She yawns, and her back hurts a bit. She wears a white pyjama. Apparently, she was sleeping on the wrong side, but it could also be because she had to sleep on the couch - where else should she sleep, Nui always has to have the best she can get. She relaxes by practicing a short muscle relaxation and then stands up. Her hair is woozy, but that's normal when she wakes up. Her little

apartment is located in the inner city of Tokyo. At the morning, there isn't much going on. A few people drive around here and there, but other than that it's quiet. It's been a pretty busy night, there's no doubt about it when she takes a look at all the bottles, papers and the food that lays on the ground outside. Besides, it's sunday and therefore there aren't a lot of people outside anyway. Hoomaru continues to brush her teeth and then walks into the kitchen to cook water for a tea, until she hears Nui in her room. With a cautious look, Hoomaru walks to the door of her room and listens with an ear. It's not as quiet as it should be. Is that Nui stuttering? Cautiously she opens the door and looks at Nui. She is awake, and she sits in the corner of the small room, with an extremely scared face expression. Hoomaru is surprised and slowly walks towards Nui.

"Nui, what happend?!" Hoomaru asks worried. Nui looks at Hoomaru, with huge and scared eyes. She is genuinely scared apparently.

"Hoomaru...?... is this just a bad joke or is this all real!?"

"What do you...?"

"I SACRIFICED MYSELF FOR LADY RAGYO! THIS ISN'T FUNNY, ICHIRO!" she says loud and smiles scared, then she giggles. She seems to not know how to react on a situation like this. Hoomaru walks towards Nui and holds her shoulders, then she looks into her eyes, trying to conform her.

"Hey!" Hoomaru says. Nui looks at Hoomaru and suddenly becomes quiet.

"It's alright, Harime. Whatever happened, you are in the real world and alive."

"... are you sure?" she asks.

"Yeah, pretty much. At least I didn't saw binary codes popping up in the air." Hoomaru answers. Nui nods and thinks briefly. Then she

smiles.

"Hoomaru! I'm very happy to see you around here. Finally a human that isn't as worthless as the rest of the bunch of clowns!" she smiles and stands up. Nui wears a purple pyjama. Nui simply walks out of the room. Hoomaru is speechless, and the entire situation is very uncomfortable, even a bit scary.

"Please Soroi, I hope you got my message..." Hoomaru thinks worried.

Some time later...

"So? How's it looking with the wound?" Satsuki asks her sister Ryuko who munches a little snack right now.

"Better. Still burns like hell but at least the wound is healed for the most part." Ryuko answers relieved. Satsuki nods.

"So what are you going to do when REVOCS is sold?"

"I don't know. With the money that belongs to both of us I could... pff... I don't know, maybe open a restaurant? Honestly... I never thought about this as much as I should have. So far, there was almost no one who considered actually buying REVOCS. At least not really. But Houka says this man who wants to buy REVOCS or at least parts of it seems to be very interested in it."

"We know this guy?"

"I only know his first name. Hirata. CEO of a company called HY-Tech, spoken like High tech. I don't know, it's a weird idea for a name but if he likes it. Anyway... for a small company they seem to be pretty rich, and I don't like that. This is fishy to me. That's why Houka investigates before we actually talk but if the man is serious about all of this then we might have a deal."

"Cool." Ryuko answers and munches some more. There is a thought though that keeps her busy, and Satsuki notices that.

"You know... I wonder if I could have beaten that asshole yesterday if I would have had Senketsu..." Ryuko thinks loudly.

"Senketsu is dead. There is no sense in thinking about it." Satsuki answers.

"I guess..." Ryuko answers melancholic . Satsuki puts on a thick winter jacket to hide her noble suit she wears, and to resist the cold outside.

"I know it's not easy without him. But in the end, he was nothing more than a uniform. Don't grief too much. You think a lot about him, and that hurts you. It's not the first time you have to deal with serious head aches or stomach pain." Satsuki mentions and walks to the door. Ryuko sighs.

"Mhm."

"You lay down a few more minutes. I'll see for my car to warm up a bit. It's been a few months since I drove it. When I'm done, we can drive to Ōsaka to meet up with Nonon. She'll give us a warm place to sleep at while we are there." Satsuki explains. Ryuko nods, and then Satsuki leaves the apartment, closing the door. Ryuko looks at the ground and holds her hands on her face.

While Satsuki looks at the car, not much is happening at the REVOCS industrial area. Satsuki's servant and butler Soroi works here and keeps the presidential office clean. It serves as a reason to continue work for Satsuki, but the main reason why he is still there is to take a look at Hoomaru every once in a while. She might found redemption thanks to Satsuki, however it wouldn't hurt still watching over her. The work is enjoyable and quiet as not a lot of people visit the presidential office, and Hoomaru is good to talk with. She and Soroi sometimes eat together for lunch when they have break. However, Soroi notices fast that Hoomaru is not in the office, as it is

still cold here. Normally, it would be warm here. He also notices that neither her computer is on, nor there are documents on the desk. It's concerning as Hoomaru usually is always in time and reliable. The lights are on though. Soroi looks around suspicious. He is older, and that is obvious, as he walks a bit slower than usual.

"Miss Hoomaru?" he asks calm but determined. No answer. Soroi walks to her desk to look after notes, and he finds one quickly. With a frown he sees a note laying on the desk. If Hoomaru would have been sick, she would have called Soroi, but since she did not, there has to be a different reason. He reads the note.

"Soroi,

Nui Harime appeared in the office. I don't have time or the opportunity to tell Lady Kiryuin as that would make Harime suspicious. Tell her as soon as possible! I'll make sure Harime doesn't do anything stupid.

Hoomaru."

Soroi puts the note away and takes the phone quickly. He tries to call Satsuki. The connection builds up. Ryuko notices the phone call and walks to the phone, but then, Soroi hears something in the presidential office. Maybe it is Hoomaru after all? At the very least, steps are audible. He puts away the phone to take a look.

"Hello?" Ryuko says into the phone. Soroi can't hear Ryuko though as he got older, his ears aren't the best anymore.

"Hoomaru? It's me, Ryuko? What do you need?" Ryuko asks. Soroi walks up the stairs and notices the office is open. Confused, he walks into it to take a look. The doors to Ragyo Kiryuins and Nui Harimes rooms are open. He pinches his eyes a bit, until he hears someone giggling. The chair at the desk turns around.

"Mitsuzô Soroi? I've heard a few things about your nephew. Talented tailor, knows how to work with life fibers. I'd love to visit him one

day." Ichiro grins...

Ryuko is confused. She puts the phone away and stops the call. Then she waits for Satsuki. Her sister arrived in the garage, driving out the car out of it and letting the motor work for a while. She has a white sports car, pretty expensive and modern, but she didn't drove it for months since she didn't really had a reason to do so. She normally drives via Uber as this makes it less obvious that someone as rich as her is in the area. Besides, the car is obviously better than most, and so it is an eye catcher for the people here in Tokyo, since most drive with simple and cheap ones. Satsuki does not sink that much though. It's annoying enough for her to wear cheap and dirty clothes like everyone else to not be noticed. The car is warm inside and the seats are very comfortable. Windows are coloured in a dark blue color to make identifying the driver more difficult. And the interior is also very appealing. The seats are black as well. She drives with her car a few blocks around. This takes around fifteen minutes, but now she is confident that she knows what she is doing again. Doing a few short practice drives surely wouldn't harm, especially after months of not driving at all. Satisfied, she drives to a huge car park that has a connection to the highway. That's why she does not park her car in the garage of the skyscraper. There's no need to waste time after all. Satsuki leaves the car, locks it and then sees a train driving on the monorail. She gets a call on her phone. Accepting the call, she notices it is Houka Inumuta. Houka talks with Satsuki while she walks back to her apartment.

"Houka?"

"Hello Satsuki."

"What is it?"

"I was collecting data on this "HY-Tech" company until I got a message on my laptop, telling me that the data on the REVOCS guide lines and contracts have been changed. Did you maybe forget to tell me you changed something?" Houka asks confused.

"I do not remember issuing a change in the contracts or data in general. Might have been a system issue or an amateur of COVERS."

"REVOCS has a good security system regarding the data as you know. I'm certain it was not an amateur, and I can not imagine there is an issue with the system itself - I've tested it dozens of times.

"Hm... then probably something is wrong. Houka, I'll speak to you soon. I need you to travel to Ôsaka and meet up with Nonon or Sanageyama. Ryuko and me will be there soon as well."

"To Nonon? I thought she is busy? And Sanageyama... give me one good reason why I should go there." Houka asks.

"Too long to tell on the phone. Trust me, I need you in Ôsaka. I'll tell you what is going when you and the others are with us."

"... *sigh*. Very well, Satsuki. I'll see that I can join you as soon as possible."

"Thank you, and thanks for letting me know." Satsuki answers.

"Of course, Satsuki." Houka answers and stops the call. Satsuki walks into the elevator. She thinks about what might have changed something on the data of the REVOCS corporation? Entering the hall, she looks surprised when she sees her servant Soroi.

"Soroi!?" Satsuki notices surprised. Her servant should be at REVOCS and not here. He knocks at the apartment door. Ryuko stands up.

"What are you doing here?" she asks. Soroi turns to Satsuki. He looks strange... it's as if he isn't he himself.

"My lady..."

"Soroi, what is it and why are you here, answer me." she orders and walks towards Soroi.

"Don't!" Soroi says loud. Satsuki is unimpressed and comes closer, until she notices life fibers moving through his eyes.

"Oh no..." she mumbles worried.

"Lady Satsuki... he wants REVOCS. You need to go..." Soroi explains. Something inside him is fighting against him. Is it the life fibers that try to control him? Is that the reason he is capable of speaking more or less normally even though it's the life fibers who control his body? Ryuko approaches the door.

"Finally, was about time Satsuki comes back." Ryuko mumbles.

"Lady Satsuki... he will hunt you and your sister down... you need to go before... oh... god..." he mumbles painful. Satsuki takes a step back as she sees Soroi slowly glowing up red, quickly, and painful too. Red fibers light up inside his body, and as Ryuko opens the door, Soroi all of a sudden explodes. The explosion shreds him apart, blood spreads, and due to heat of the life fibers, a fire starts. Half of the 22th floor is annihilated, and fire spreads. Satsuki bangs with her body against the wall next to the elevator, and her head hits the wall. She moans in pain. Life fibers crawl through the hall.

Ryuko quickly stands up and removes the fire on her body, then she runs into the hall. If you are not careful, you could fall down the entire building and die a horrible death. She notices Satsuki.

"Satsuki! Ryuko calls worried and runs to Satsuki.

"SOROI!" Satsuki screams. All that is left of him is the few shredded clothes, a large pool of blood and life fibers feasting on it. Ryuko helps Satsuki stand up. Blood drops down the floor. All of a sudden, several new explosions are audible. Windows break, pipes burst open, and fire spreads through the building. And then, there is another explosion, apparently above them. The 22th floor as well as parts of the third to 18th floor exploded, and the 25th floor is completely annihilated. The roof burns, and smoke rises. Then they can hear the elevator fall down the elevator shaft as an result of the

25th floor being gone now. A huge bang is audible - the elevator is on the ground now.

"Soroi..." Satsuki mumbles in disbelief.

"Come on, Satsuki! I got a feeling this asshole Harime knows where we are!" Ryuko orders and looks at Satsuki. Her suit is dirty thanks to the explosion, and Ryuko doesn't look too good either, with her red vest and shirt stained with Soroi's blood and fire that damaged the clothes badly. With her strength, she opens the elevator doors. And now she is sure that the elevator is gone.

"Fuck." she says annoyed. Satsuki runs to the stairwell but it's destroyed for the most part too thanks to the explosions.

"Well the stairs won't work either, I suppose." Satsuki says annoyed and walks back into the hall. They search for an exit route stressed, but can't find one. At least none that is obvious, until they see a pile of life fibers crawling from the outer wall of the skyscraper into the hall, and Ichiro materializes out of it.

"Well, well, both sisters are here, indeed." he smiles.

"You..." Ryuko says angry. Satsuki looks at Ichiro with a murderous face expression.

"Lady Satsuki, I've heard you always treated your servants very poor, why would you care about the death of such a worthless individual like Mitsuzô Soroi?" he grins.

"Worthless individual..." she mumbles evil.

"He would be thankful, for he does not know what will happen in the future. Now... I know you both lovely sisters will find out a way out of this undoubtedly miserable situation because you apparently always do, at least that's what I've been told." Ichiro explains. Ryuko runs at Ichiro angry, attacking him, Ichiro however effortlessly dodges. He creates a pile of life fibers which he throws to Ryuko. It explodes in

front of Ryuko, slamming her against the wall next to the elevator shaft. Blood appears behind the wall.

"Soroi was a friend." Satsuki says evil.

"Oh, was he? Well, I tend to say to have a few less friends that are actually useful instead of thousands that are just as worthless as Soroi himself... otherwise, it wouldn't make much of a difference anyway. Now, I wish both of you a lot of fun trying to get out of this very unlucky situation while I'll take good care of REVOCS. We don't want it to rot while you are presumed dead, right?" Ichiro laughs and bows before Satsuki. She remains calm and watches how Ichiro escapes. Ryuko stands up.

"Great guy, isn't he?"

"Save your jokes for another time, Ryuko. Do you have an idea of how we should escape?" Satsuki asks annoyed.

"Besides jumping out? Nah, not really."

"I won't jump, Ryuko." Satsuki mentions. They can hear another explosion, but it was probably not caused by life fibers, but by pipes or something else that has been used for the skyscraper. The floor slowly starts to break apart.

"Where's your car?" Ryuko asks.

"At the parking lot, what... no, Ryuko." Satsuki says annoyed.

"You prefer to die?"

"There has to be a different way!" Satsuki says. The ground is teared apart, and they can see the hall of the 21th floor partially already. The ground below Satsuki is about to break apart as well. That's enough for Ryuko.

"Apologies in advance, Sis!" Ryuko says and grabs her sister at the arm with as much power as possible, so much that it actually hurts

Satsuki.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!" she screams shocked. Ryuko jumps out of the skyscraper, and Satsuki is forced as well, falling out of it with Ryuko.

"RYUKOOOOO!" she screams angry, while Ryuko tries to control the fall. The parking lot is near the skyscraper. People are running way and panic, and huge amounts of humans start watching what is happening at the skyscraper. Half of the skyscraper is burning. This action was surely planned by Ichiro, he couldn't have done that all by himself without the help of the COVERS sympathizers. Both sisters fall towards the roof of the parking lot. Ryuko throws Satsuki above her with her life fiber strength.

"FUCK!" she screams panicked. She wouldn't be that scared if she would wear Junketsu as it would lower the fall damage a lot but without, she truly is just a mere human. Ryuko uses her life fiber abilities to form her body briefly before slamming on the roof. Satsuki tries to stay above Ryuko. Her younger sister extends her body, which is extremely painful for her, but it also allows her body to be more flexible and it takes up more space, and as Ryuko falls onto the ground, blood spreads. Ryuko moans in pain. Shortly after, Satsuki falls onto Ryuko, decreasing the damage she would have sustained immensely, thus surviving the fall thanks to Ryuko's life fiber ability. It's painful nonetheless. Satsuki crawls off Ryuko painful, while Ryuko forms her body back into a normal human. Luckily for Ryuko, everyone has left the parking lot already as it is too close to the skyscraper. Ryuko regenerates as she is half dead obviously, but she slowly starts to move again. She turns around, laying on the back now, and looks up to the skyscraper.

She starts laughing knowing that she saved her sister. Satsuki probably sprained a few bones but that's certainly better than being dead. Ryuko wouldn't have a problem dying of course.

"We won't do this again. NEVER AGAIN, RYUKO!" Satsuki screams angry.

"Sure, Satsuki... no problem... always happy to help." Ryuko says and stands up.

The skyscraper burns. Huge parts of it are shred and the people inside it have no idea of how to escape. It's a horrific scenery in Tokyo. Ichiro probably asked Soroi out about Satsuki and then corrupted him with a powerful life fiber strand. And he probably wasn't the only one considering that Ichiro went for the COVERS sympathizers as well.

In any case, the situation is for both sisters extremely clear now. The death of Ragyo and the Life Fiber sickness did not mark the end of the war against the life fibers. It appears to be nothing else than a first wave, or a skirmish before the actual battle. In the end, Ragyo was just a human after all - a human that turned itself into life fibers. Who knows what is going to happen next. One thing is certain however.

This was just the beginning...

Pining For A Friend I Love

Datas are visible. Command lines are typed every second, and become visible on the monitors. They reflect Houka Inumuta, and he is stressed. Houka types stressed on his keyboard, his fingers feel like they would burn. Whoever was able to hack into the security systems of REVOCS has to know more about them than Houka does, and Houka knows a lot about them already. He tries to fight off the intruder, it's almost like a real fight.

But nothing helps, and so, Houka loses the control over the system. No matter what he types, his commands are not detected by the security system. He can only watch how commands and bots flood the monitors, all with the goal of taking over REVOCS systems. He moves back with his chair to take a proper look at all the 24 monitors in his room. He undoubtedly still is a data fanatic. But this won't help him. The commands suddenly stop, like everything else. The command lines reflect on his glasses. Houka can't find words, and his mouth opens shocked, as he stands up. A logo slowly appears part for part onto the monitors, and a word becomes visible.

Neo-REVOCS.

...

...

...

"This is the automatic news system of the prefecture of Tokyo: A skyscraper was target of what it appears to be an assault of the COVERS sympathizers. A huge part of the inhabitants died due to the attack, this includes the CEO of the worlds most infamous fashion corporation REVOCS, Satsuki Kiryuin, and it's vice president, Ryuko Matoi. Surprisingly, according to the contract of the REVOCS corporation, the heir of the organisation would go to a

rather unknown person called Ichiro Harime. Supposedly, he is a relative of the former, so called "Grand Couturier", Nui Harime, however, he does not share her views and thoughts. Our prayers go out for every family involved in this tragic and coward attack. We will also watch with huge interest how this new CEO will handle the corporation." the radio says. Satsuki switches the channels. Ryuko's big sister is angry as it seems. Her bones hurt, but it's alright. Ryuko sits on the passengers seat, looking to the front side of the car. The cold way the news system talks about what happened in Tokyo feels uncomfortable and can reasonably make angry. Satsuki switches on a different channel where music runs. A new song should start soon. Snow falls here and there.

"And so we wish the people out there on the streets a great day. The next song will be one a few people will probably identify with, thinking about better times. In these times where a sickness plagues humanity it's even more important that we all never lose hope, even though life got worse for many of us. It's gonna be okay again. Ladies and Gentlemen, "Hunger of the Pine" from Alt-J." a man says via the radio. His voice sounds calm and comfortable.

(AN: I HIGHLY (!) suggest you look up "Hunger Of The Pine" from Alt-J and listen to it. The song serves as the main theme of the story and Ryuko's story. Trust me.)

It's a melancholic song that can be heard. Satsuki focuses on the highway while Ryuko simply does nothing. She just sits on the passengers seat. Ryuko doesn't even make a certain face expression. It's clear however that she asks herself right now how all of this could have happened in such a short time. Life can make a 180 fairly fast. Their target is Ōsaka, visiting Nonon and eventually ask her where Nudist Beach is. It's clear that Satsuki however doesn't completely know either what to do. Junketsu and Senketsu do not exist anymore, the scissor blades are sunken deep in the Bay of Tokyo, and Nudist Beach has to be found first. Ryuko sinks her head. Her sister is worried.

"I know, Ryuko." Satsuki says calm. Ryuko does not react. Her big sister hesitates at first, looks back at the highway, then to Ryuko again.

"Lean back and try to sleep some more. This will be a long story." Satsuki mentions. Ryuko doesn't know if she should. She looks back onto the road. Cars are everywhere, snow falls, and clouds dominate the sky. Even though the car has a nice temperature, Ryuko feels cold. And she is indeed tired, just like Satsuki. Ryuko then does what Satsuki suggested and leans back, inhaling and exhaling through her nose briefly. Her thoughts slowly drift away from the car, Satsuki and what just happened in Tokyo. She starts thinking of Senketsu and Mako thanks to the song. Both friends are gone. Satsuki and Ryuko leave the area around Tokyo and find themselves back onto a about 50 meters high bridge. Ryuko turns her head slightly to the right, looking out of the window, watching the sun. Rays break through the clouds. A tear drops and slowly moves down her face. The sun reminds her of the uniform that always cared about her. Satsuki notices that her sister is sad even though she has a hard time understanding the sadness, since in Satsuki's opinion, Senketsu was still life fiber and therefore evil. On the other hand she also knows that Ryuko loved the uniform - maybe not in a romantic way, but like a very, very good friendship.

Ryuko thinks back, about the time she had to leave the village in Mie. For example the first day in the Matoi-Mansion. Everything was new and beautiful - strong colours, expensive interior, a pretty garden and a nice scent. But no matter how nice and luxurious the mansion Satsuki paid for Ryuko was, it never was able to replace the loss of Mako and Senketsu, or a second try for a new life. The life fiber sickness feasts on her will for years. She still knows how horrible the first night in the mansion was - horrible enough to never talk about it, not even to Satsuki.

Guilt feelings chase down the young woman. She feels guilty for the life fiber sickness, just like Satsuki, and even more about the fact she was never truly able to avenge the death of Isshin. At some point,

she started to believe it because of the very sickness the world is plagued with. Ryuko bites her teeth together and holds her hands onto her face. The song makes her feel sad, Satsuki notices that, but she also believes that a pain like this is necessary - in the end, at least that's what she thinks, you have to face reality, as cruel as it is. No one is grateful, kindness is a weakness and only the strongest survive. According to the news, Satsuki and Ryuko are dead and REVOCS is founded a new, and renamed into Neo-REVOCS. How did this happen so quick? And why so easy too? An operation like this can't be planned in one night... can it?

Around afternoon, every four deva members watch TV in their homes. All of them have the same face expression - it shows disbelief and fear. The same thoughts go through their heads, and they all try to call Satsuki, but nothing helps. Houka packs his stuff to get to Ôsaka, hoping that Satsuki and Ryuko maybe actually did escape and all of this was just a fake. Gamagoori leaves his home as well - he loves all of them and he also cares for Mako, but Satsuki is very important to him, and so he travels to Ôsaka as well. He does not know that Satsuki is on her way to it, however, he thinks that he has to meet up with the others to talk about what happened and searching her together.

Houmaru sits at her window, ready to leave Tokyo, but she can't believe what happened here. The fire isn't far away from her apartment. Was that the deed of Ichiro Harime who Nui talked about? According to the media it was the COVERS sympathizers. Nui also noticed the attacks, but she doesn't care. Houmaru sighs and packs her bag with some clothes, then she visits the bathroom Nui is in. Nui is also ready to go, but she cuts her hair. It has to go, as a symbol of development. Whatever happened after Nui's death had to change her quite a bit. Houmaru knows that Nui loves her hair, just like everything else of her body and personality, which surprises her. Houmaru realizes that this Nui however is the one that lost her arms because she wasn't careful enough, and that is what Nui wants to show too. It leads to a heavy contrast regarding her dress, but that's probably the intention. She wants to appear

unpredictable and dangerous. Houmaru does not ask, she just goes with it. Nui and her human friend see their reflection in the mirror. Nui does not smile at all - cutting hair isn't fun. The pigtails are gone, and only streaks are left. The combed hair hangs down now, up to the shoulders.

The first workers of REVOCS start to prepare everything in the industrial area, making everything ready for work again. A light enlightens the darkness of the huge stitching hall of the Grand Couturier, and sewing machines are audible. Masaru cautiously looks into the sacred room of Nui Harime where she once worked on Shinra Koketsu. Behind Masaru, his COVERS followers prepare to make the room ready for work again. Masaru watches Ichiro sitting at the huge work desk. He stitches something together.

The day passes. Minutes feel like hours during the car ride, and nothing interesting happens. All which stays is a feeling of pining for a friend Ryuko loves. That's all. Just a piercing grief by that very feeling. Snow falls the entire day, but the closer they come to Ôsaka, the more the weather changes. Back in Tokyo, everything was white due to the snow, but in Ôsaka it's rather soggy. Most of the snow has melted thanks to the booming industry of the city, and in general because of the urban painted Japan, in which nature has become less important than ever before. There aren't a lot of places where you can find a nice and beautiful place anymore.

The late evening arrives, and it's 9:22 PM. Satsuki wakes up Ryuko, who seems to have nodded off during the ride. Satsuki herself is tired as well, but at the very least they arrived in Ôsaka now. Sanageyama and Nonon live here. At night, Ôsaka is a quiet place where nothing happens. Yellow lights lighten up the darkness of the streets that are thanks to the heavy industry sometimes full of steam and fog. Satsuki and Ryuko drive through the poor districts of the city in which the fog is well visible. Here and there they can see one or two people walking around, but other than that it's quite silent here. After the end of REVOCS, the power of the capitalistic Takarada spread out even further, and a class system apparently developed, if

not as huge as in Tokyo, thanks to the huge amounts of money everyone has here. Being poor is relative in Ôsaka - the worst thing that can happen to you is that you cannot afford visiting a theatre at the end of the month. Streets in Ôsaka are cold and uncomfortable but you can drive well on them with a car, and you don't have to worry about jealous people since everyone here can buy a expensive car. Arriving in the richer areas of the city, the difference regarding the architecture of the houses is visible.

While the poor districts still look decent and solid but not more, the richer districts have mansions with huge gardens, almost like a palace for everyone, just smaller and for about 1-5 persons, depending on the family. They remind Ryuko a bit of her own mansion, just not as impressive as her own. Satsuki really nailed it with the design of Ryukos mansion. During the day, a lot of people walk around and you can see something interesting everywhere. It's definitely much different than Tokyo. A few miles away, the walls of the huge Naniwa Kinman High school are visible, which still is the fortress and base of Ôsaka and Takaradas operations. A few minutes later, both sisters arrive at Nonon's little mansion - a nice, huge building with a second floor, window walls and noble white walls as well as a little wall for security against invaders and visibility. Surveillance cameras hang on the corners of the building. That's because Nonon is a local celebrity for quite some time now and leads concerts every once in a while. She is one of the reasons people travel to Ôsaka, and that's why she has a lot of contacts, even to Takarada and therefore Mikisugi. There is a base next to Kyoto which serves as the main base of Nudist Beach, however, since Mikisugi is quite busy, Satsuki can't be 100% sure if he is there or not. Takarada and Mikisugi work together however and he should know exactly where he is. In order to get to Takarada, Nonon has to talk with him. Letting Satsuki into the High school can become dangerous, even now that she is dead. No one knows how people would react to that.

Satsuki parks her car at the entrance and leaves it with Ryuko, locking it up. Her huge sister walks to the gate and opens it by

entering a four digit code which opens the gate. She knows the code since Nonon told her in case she would visit her. They're best friends after all. The gate opens, and both sisters arrive at the front yard of the mansion. There is a path made out of white stones, and there's even a nice little fountain on the left. The lights here make up for a comfortable and welcoming feeling. Satsuki knocks on the door, and it opens.

"Uzu, I told you, you shoul..." mumbles Nonon and is shocked as she sees Satsuki. Her clothes looked better a while ago, and Ryuko's clothes are pretty ugly too and full of dirt. Nonon wears a red shirt with a white jeans, and she also has a pony tail now.

"SATSUKI, WHY THE FUCK DID YOU NOT CALL BACK!?" Nonon asks angry and hugs Satsuki relieved. Satsuki smiles, watching Nonon patting Ryukos shoulders with a slight smug face.

"I love you too, Nonon." Satsuki answers. Nonon leads them into her house. Her living room is minimalistic - a red carpet, a glass table, white stairs with glass fences, a couch, a TV and a shelf with some books. The other doors in the room lead to the kitchen, the storage room and a bathroom. Upstairs is Nonons room, a second bath room and a guest room for visitors. Ryuko notices the speakers in the various rooms. Both sisters sit down on the couch while Nonon jumps onto an comfy chair, leaning her head onto it.

"Nonon, I know you have a lot of questions, we..."

"So how exactly did your skyscraper went to heaven, why did it went to heaven and why the hell did a wannabe clown take over your company? And most importantly: how did you got out!?" Nonon asks impatient. Satsuki hesitates at first.

"Ryuko went into my apartment, wounded, talking about this "clown" as you call him. He attacked her. We wanted to visit Mikisugi today and we need your help to locate him for that, and of course we need your guest room if that is fine for you. I apologize for this rather spontaneous visit. In any case, after I got used to my car again, this

man, Ichiro is his name, apparently knew where we were, and well, he blew up the skyscraper. Ryuko was bold enough to actually jump out of the building, taking me with her. If it wasn't for her life fiber abilities, I probably would be dead. However, I cannot explain how he got the control over REVOCS... but we need to stop this psychopath."

"Mhm. Alright, you guys get something to eat, you look tired and pretty bad. I'll prepare the guest room for both of you, and once we're done with breakfast, we go to Takarada. That little birdy is still crazy but he definitely knows where Mikisugi hangs around. I'll make sure he'll let you in, Satsuki." Nonon smiles.

"Thank you. Apologies again for storming your house." Satsuki answers grateful. Nonon shrugs with her shoulders.

"Oh it's alright, you should have seen what happened three weeks ago when Houka and Uzu were here."

"What do you mean?" Ryuko asks.

"Somehow, Uzu convinced Houka to start dancing on my table as if this is a night club. I think they did some sort of competition or bets and I had to suffer for it. Well, in short, they destroyed my table. Now I have a new one. And Uzu owes me money... and a drink." Nonon grins and stands up, preparing some food in the kitchen. Ryuko looks around. The living room is indeed comfortable to look at.

The evening is rather quiet. After Nonon prepared the guest room and gave her friends something to eat, Ryuko and Satsuki lay down. Satsuki always loved the interior and the way this mansion was built. It is a truly nice building Nonon lives in. Both start sleeping, hoping that Ichiro did not follow them to Nonon. Ryuko's sister is unsettled the entire night, which wakes Ryuko up. She can't do anything however, and waking up would just delay Satsuki's nightmare due to the sickness. She watches Satsuki turning around in her bed nearly every one or two minutes, and she grabs the blanket tight. Ryuko sighs and tries to continue sleeping. Nonon and the Elite-four in

general do not suffer from the life fiber sickness as they never used a Kamui. Chances were high they would have to suffer as well because of their Goku-uniforms, but they were lucky. Ryuko watches the moon one last time. It's beautiful.

The next day starts. After a short breakfast, Satsuki, Ryuko and Nonon continue to visit Takarada. He knows Satsuki will come thanks to Nonon who told him in a very "kind" way he should open the gates of his school for her. She also told the other four devas that they should meet up with her at the gates of the school. Gamagoori, Sanageyama and Inumuta don't know Satsuki and Ryuko are alive. They meet up in the city of Nara which lies in the east of Ôsaka. Arriving at the school, the three men exit their car and are surprised seeing Satsuki and Ryuko alive. Inumuta is visibly relieved, Gamagoori bows before Satsuki and Sanageyama nods towards Satsuki and Ryuko.

"Lady Satsuki, you are alive." Gamagoori says relieved and moves his head up to Satsuki. She cleaned her suit and has a blue tie now.

"Gamagoori, stand up. It's not like we are... members of a committee or student council." Satsuki smiles slightly. Gamagoori nods.

"I said it again, did I?"

"Sooner or later you'll get the hang out of it." Satsuki answers.

"Satsuki, I thought you died, I... I lost control over the security systems." Houka says disappointed.

"Hey Nonon, what's up? You got a new table?" Sanageyama grins cheeky. Nonon slaps Sanageyama, then he giggles.

"That hurt."

"I hope so. Asshole." she grumbles and smiles. Sanageyama laughs. The group around Satsuki and Ryuko walks through the gate of the huge school, and they see about a dozen of students, heavily armed.

Via a huge monitor on top of the gigantic school building, Takarada appears. He still sounds and looks like a nuisance.

"AH WELL, WHO IS THAT WHO APPEARS IN MY REALM?"

Takarada screams. Someone whispers something to him in the background. Takarada's eyes become huge, then he clears his throat and changes something on the camera and microphone apparently.

"He forgot to turn down the volume." Nonon whispers to Satsuki and Ryuko. Ryuko looks around. There are tents with money bags in the school yard, and money printing machines are everywhere. It's either some kind of weird project or Takarada embraces his money loving veins even more.

"Still as crazy as five years ago, hm?" Ryuko notices.

"Kaneo Takarada! I was hoping to never see your visage again, sadly life is very cruel to me and that's why I have to lower my standards to talk with a fool like you!" Satsuki answers loud. Takarada laughs, pretty quiet too for some reason.

"Well then join me in the office." he says very quiet.

"He's as stupid as he looks like." Nonon says grinning to Ryuko.

"Yeah I can tell." Ryuko answers. Satsuki walks through various halls of the school, moving from floor to floor until she meets up in the presidential office.

"That's a neat outfit by the way, Ira." Nonon says. Gamagoori wears a huge flexible jacket and a brown suit which reminds a bit of his Goku-Uniform. The school yard is kind of uncomfortable, however, people seem to not care about the cold weather here. Money is everything apparently. Houka still wears his hoodie and Sanageyama a white jacket with green tanktop.

"Aint it cold for you, dude?" Ryuko asks Sanageyama.

"Cold? Nah, not at all." Sanageyama grins.

"Okay." Ryuko answers. In the background the group can hear overly glorifying music about money and finances which only "slightly" annoying. The monitor is turned off as Satsuki enters the room. She seems to talk with Takarada now.

"Tell me, Matoi, how did you survive this cowardly attack?" Gamagoori asks curious.

"Oh, you know... I suppose at certain times in your life you just gotta jump, if you get what you mean." Ryuko says cool. Gamagoori pinches his eyes, then nods.

"... you just gotta jump. Hm." he mumbles to himself.

"Oh by the way, Houka, I wanted to ask you if you could help me repair the TV in my room. It got damaged badly when I was doing some exercises." Sanageyama says. Suddenly, everyone looks at him confused. He looks around.

"What's wrong, guys?" he asks.

"How in the world can you think it's a good idea to exercise in the room where your TV is located?!" Gamagoori asks in disbelief.

"I've got some new tools to exercise but I didn't had the time to construct them properly and so I had to do my exercises in the living room last time." Sanageyama answers and grins.

"And why don't you just put them away?" Gamagoori continues.

"Because they were all unpacked, and the various parts were lying around in the room already. Of course I could have just left out the exercises for that day but then I would have not been able to beat my record."

"Which record?"

"Exercising for two hours a day. I'll do this for a few years already. Keeps someone fit, young and gives a good feeling. Finished 120 days in a row once, the current streak with the TV is 98 days at the moment so I still gotta do some more."

"Is it a TV from Hokkaido Electrics?"

"Yeah, why?" Sanageyama asks. Ryuko looks at Houka with a smirk. Houka smiles slightly.

"Well... I work at Hokkaido Electrics actually. I can tell some people they should work on your TV if you remind me again when this is all over." Ryuko grins.

"For real?"

"Sure."

"Cool. Thanks, man." Sanageyama answers satisfied. Then, all of a sudden, birds fly away from the roof of the school, and you can hear someone mocking around. Sounds like Satsuki. The monitor suddenly turns on and you can see Takarada lying on his desk. Satsuki is holding his jacket tight. He grins at Satsuki scared.

"HEY, HEY, HEY WE CAN TALK ABOUT THIS, SATSUKI, I DONT NEED MONEY, A FAVOUR WOULD..."

"Takarada, I do not negotiate with you and I do not share your view about money. Tell me where Mikisugi is." Satsuki says annoyed. The students look confused.

"You gotta excuse Satsuki, she can sometimes appear very direct." Nonon grins towards the students.

"Please, Satsuki, just a little fav..."

"Should I call Sanageyama? He will gladly negotiate with you." Satsuki suggests. Takarada's eyes become huge, and he swallows.

"AH! ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT, I'LL TELL YOU, GET OFF ME NOW, THAT HURTS!" he screams and moves around scared. Satsuki leaves off, then, Takarada's head falls onto his desk and his glasses fall down. He inhales quickly.

"You really are unfriendly, Satsuki."

"I was worse. Now talk."

"You know the base on that little island near Kyoto, Okishima? As far as I know, Mikisugi is there at the moment and he won't leave so soon. I'll tell them you're on your way."

"See, Takarada. It's that simple." Satsuki answers and walks back to the door.

"Yeah, yeah, now go before I..." Takarada mumbles. Satsuki turns her head, curious about what he is going to say next.

"... before I, uh..."

"Know your place, greedy pig." Satsuki says and leaves. She exits the school and meets up with her group. On the way outside, they see a group of 40 students, carrying bags filled with coins. They also, for some reason, wear a uniform made out of money. It looks hilarious. Sanageyama and Ryuko look at each other in disbelief and Satsuki shakes her head while the other three look at them curiously.

"Move away! Who do you think you are!" a student asks.

"You got some neat suits, guys, you working in a bank or something?" Sanageyama grins sassy.

"Pathetic." Satsuki mumbles annoyed.

"These suits are the best the Naniwa Kinman High school can offer!"

"And why the hell do you guys need so many coins?" Nonon asks.

"It's ammo for our coin rifles!"

"Coin rifles!?" Gamagoori asks confused.

"They shoot coins!" another student says.

"You don't say." Nonon answers.

"Let's go." Satsuki orders. Ryuko looks perplexed. Coin rifles... welcome to Ôsaka. Now that it's daylight it's more obvious that even the poor people here can afford some expensive stuff.

"Kinda glad Mako isn't here to be honest." Ryuko thinks and smiles. Mako probably would have raided the Takoyaki station near them. They enter their cars and start driving to Okishima.

A light goes on. Steps are audible and echo through a huge command center - old monitors for surveillance cameras, consoles that operate various rooms and doors that lead to other rooms like an arsenal or a huge stitching hall... and then, Houmaru appears in the room.

"From high to low life, hm?" Houmaru mumbles. Nui appears and walks into the huge room. It's cold but Nui does not care at all - thanks to her life fiber body cold weather won't harm her as long as she isn't weakened. Curiously she walks to the arsenal and opens the room. Everything is in there still. Pistols, batons, nothing special actually. Houmaru follows Nui and turns on several lights in the room. Nui looks around, she seems to search something. Apparently it's some sort of switch she turns on, and suddenly, a security box opens up that wouldn't have opened with hands alone. Nui smiles as she sees what is in the box. She takes the item out - it appears to be some kind of rifle. It looks rather old but it's aura is very impressive, as Houmaru notices. Nui looks at Houmaru happily.

"A REVOCS standard fiber rifle. We only produced five of them and bunkered them here. Never produced more because it wasn't worth the effort." Houmaru comments.

"Exactly. Good old times, dear Houmaru!" Nui answers and leaves the room happily. The so called REVOCS fiber rifle is a prototype weapon developed by a research & development team in this bunker like base. It was an attempt on getting power in the weapon industry as well to gain power over the military and possible resistance - would the attempt have been succesfull, Nudist Beach certainly would have had a huge problem and they would have had to rely on even older weapons to combat the life fibers. After all, REVOCS knew about Nudist Beach. The standard fiber rifle reminds from the looks of it of a old german weapon used during World War 2 - the so called "Gewehr 43." It was used as inspiration because it was a solid and well looking weapon, and you were able to modify it as well. There is also a REVOCS logo on the stock of the weapon.

Houmaru continues to prepare everything in the central of the base. The base itself is built out of white sterile walls with REVOCS banners here and there, and a metallic red ground. Nui visits the laboratory, while her friend and colleague Houmaru turns on the cameras. This way, both of them gain access to the entire area and they will find out if an intruder comes closer. The base itself is built in the mountain, and a huge gate grants access to the base itself. Via huge elevators that can carry goods you can enter the huge complex. About 300 people can work here probably. Nui laughs happily. With a curious thought, Houmaru enters the laboratory and sees how Nui walks out of it with a good amount of life fibers in her hands. If you think about it, it's surprising how much life fibers survived the destruction of Shinra Koketsu.

A brief bit of time passes in which Houmaru gets used with the main computer of the central. With this computer you can control the entire base, turn on cameras, turn on the security systems hidden in the walls and what is the most important thing: you get access to the Neo-REVOCS systems and it's possible to see where units are dispatched if they use vehicles. Right now there is nothing interesting however. The data bank of Neo-REVOCS however has a camera feed of Ichiro Harime recorded. Houmaru takes a look at it. This is apparently the person Nui talked about, and next to Ichiro,

there is this other man, Masaru Yamamoto. Houmaru falls back onto the chair, bored, waiting for something interesting to happen. She smells a nice scent, which leads her eyebrows to raise up. Then she can suddenly hear someone breathing next to her. Houmaru turns to her left and sees one of Nui Harimes Doppelgängers grinning at her, however, it wears an eye patch.

"Hello Houmaru!" the doppelgänger greets. Houmaru jumps up scared and shakes her head, then she slowly calms down. The doppelgänger giggles.

"Hello, clone." Houmaru answers. The doppelgänger giggles and walks through the room. Then, all of a sudden, four more doppelgängers appear through the doors that lead to the stitching halls, and they all greet Houmaru polite one after another.

"... oh no not this again." Houmaru mumbles and runs to the stitching halls. Nui seems to stitch herself a few new clones. About ten more doppelgängers sit here, stitching more. Apparently, there is not much more life fibers left however.

"So what are you planning now?" Houmaru asks curious.

"Me? Pff! I don't have a plan! I'll stitch myself some lovely clones and then we continue to joke around a bit!" Nui grins.

"Alright. And with what exactly? We don't have enough weapons, and I know you won't want to use the ones that are in the arsenal... I wouldn't either by the way, they look ugly." Houmaru comments.

"Needle blades, Houmaru. Needle blades."

"With the amount of life fibers we have you probably will only be able to work on about twelve more." Houmaru answers. Nui rolls her eyes.

"Eh, Houmaru, I know."

"I'm just saying. Why don't you use a needle blade either by the way?" Houmaru asks curious. Nui only smiles. She does not give an answer for some reason.

"... well anyway, I'll see if I can find a few targets to annoy Neo-REVOCS." Houmaru mentions. Nui nods and continues working. Back in the central, Houmaru sees some doppelgängers playing around - they either talk or play little games like Scissors, Stone, Paper... or catching each other.

"Where the hell am I...?... *sigh*... I gotta find a way to contact Nudist Beach." Houmaru thinks.

Some time later...

Helicopters are audible, and shots are fired. Satsuki's group reached it's destination at the Biwa lake, and the bridge that leads to the island of Okishima. With their two cars, they move over the bridge which is heavily guarded by Nudist Beach. Speedboats patrol the area, and sniper's look around, watching the area. Even in the water there are little towers guarded by machinegunners. Typical for Nudist Beach, everyone here is nearly completely naked, except for a belt and maybe a ammo vest to cover up the sexual parts partially. It's kind of dangerous if you think about it, especially during winter, but Nudist Beach wouldn't be Nudist Beach if they would start to wear jackets because of cold weather.

Satsuki and the others reach a huge gate with a banner of the Nudist Beach logo. The guards open the door and grant the group an entrance to the fortress like island. No matter where you look at, guards are everywhere, as well as military equipment such as ammo boxes, guns, cars... Nudist Beach certainly made a name in Japan. While they do not have forward operation bases in foreign countries, they do have some agents here and there to keep an eye out for life fiber activities. There is also a little actual beach to relax as Ryuko notices.

"I mean... why not?" she thinks. Shots are fired once again - apparently recruits are getting used to their weapons. Satsuki's group parks their cars, then everyone leaves them. The six of them walk over a huge plaza located in the center of the island, moving to what appears to be the main part of the base - a huge fortress. Transport vehicles drive around, carrying ammo and armor - there is even a DTR in it that has to be built together. Sanageyama also notices a few of those coin bags the guys from Naniwa Kinman carried around.

"As if these guys use coin rifles as well." Sanageyama mentions grinning.

"And everyone still is naked." Nonon mumbles and looks around. Especially interesting is the landing site. There is a huge airship on it. It reminds of a Zeppelin, but far stronger and better protected.

"Well, after this weird battleship they needed something else that is over the top." Ryuko mentions.

"Satsuki Kiryuin!" the group hears. Mikisugi appears from the huge gate that leads into the inner part of the fortress. His hair grew a bit, but other than that he looks the same. Well, and he has a few more muscles here and there, if not too many to make a huge difference. They do look nice on him though. Satsuki looks over to Mikisugi with a calm face expression.

"Mikisugi." she says.

"I'd be surprised if you guys would have actually died. I suppose you are here because of that Neo-REVOCS thing, right?" Mikisugi asks, while a little group of soldiers protect him. He looks at Ryuko. She did change a bit.

"Oh my, Ryuko, you did develop. That's a neat new hair style by the way. Reminds me of your old one, but fits since your hair got longer too." Mikisugi compliments and smiles. Ryuko giggles.

"Heh, thanks." she answers.

"Come on, we wanted to talk about the current situation anyway." he suggests.

"Good. Is Iori still here?" Satsuki asks.

"Iori is here, yeah, he's working on some new weapons at the moment."

"I see." Satsuki answers slightly worried. Mikisugi enters the huge gate and stands on an elevator with some goods. The rest of the group follows him. The base is pretty impressive, but less because of the look and more due to the security systems. Inumuta and Gamagoori notice that weapon systems are built into the walls, DTR's are ready to use and there are some spare weapons left. The ammo crates seem to carry desynchronizer ammo. They probably have been upgraded, otherwise they wouldn't store them as they don't have an effect on life fibers. It should be enough to destroy normal armor though. You could probably stop an entire army here, and both Gamagoori and Inumuta wouldn't be surprised if there would be an actual anti air system to defend the base from rocket attacks.

The elevator slowly arrives in the lower base below the lake, and Ryuko is amazed by how huge the base is. This seems to be the biggest hall of the island - the entire complex is extremely huge, and elevators connect the various halls of the base, but there seem to be other halls too. You'd probably be able to have about 1200 people work here if you work efficient enough. There are Nudist Beach soldiers everywhere, working on weapons, carrying goods or simply talking with each other. Huge gates that are built into the walls lead into the main hall of the base where you can talk with others or meet up for little operations or practicing. The gates also lead to the other rooms of the base - there is a hall for Research & Development in which Iori can be found, there's a canteen with space for 200 people, an arsenal, barracks and many more.

"Unit 10-A has to meet up for an operation in the command center of hall b in 5 minutes!" a female voice says via speakers. Nonon notices that you could use the main hall for a concert too if the morale seems to decrease.

"So you made it here pretty fast, Satsuki, not bad." Mikisugi mentions.

"Well, we shouldn't waste any time. We have an advantage at the moment, we should use it by dealing damage to slow down the process of Neo-REVOCS gaining power." Satsuki answers. The group arrives at the command center. There is a huge monitor, displaying a map of Japan. There is also a desk in the center of the room, projecting a digital map of Japan as well. If you mark something on the digital map, it will be displayed on the monitor for those who cannot take a look at the desk map. There are also a lot of consoles and computers at the walls of the room - since this is the largest command center, it also serves as the heart of the base. You can also hear the computers working in the background. Houka surely is impressed. Now that everyone entered the room, several high ranked Nudist Beach lieutenants arrive, working on the computers. Tsumugu Kinagase also enters the room, finishing a cigarette. He appears calm but strong.

"Kiryuin. Matoi." he says respectful.

"I suppose we don't have to greet each other a second time. Let's move on to the important stuff. A few days ago, some kind of unknown flying object landed onto the sunken Honnouji-Academy we all know and love. People disappear and Miss Kiryuin and Matoi suddenly are reported dead. At the same time, some blond guy called Ichiro Harime arrives, takes over REVOCS, renames it into Neo-REVOCS and now we are here. Is that correct?" Mikisugi asks. Tsumugu closes his arms, watching Ryuko carefully. Ryuko nods.

"Good. While you guys were trying to stay alive, Tsumugu and I been planning on what to do. First of all, we need life fibers to produce Anti life fiber ammo. We were able to develop it after the war to defend

ourselves against potential second invasions. We do have a few clips of ammo ready but not enough, and if this Harime knows what he is doing, then the desynchronizer ammo won't be enough."

"So what do you suggest?" Satsuki asks.

"We'll wait a few days to see how everything develops. It would be a good start by sending scouts that take a look at the factories to see what is produced there. If the factory isn't well guarded, we could send a strike team to take it down and loot it. I suppose it won't take long until something evil comes out of it again."

"Question: Why don't we just attack Neo-REVOCS now?" Nonon asks.

"Because Harime seems to be extremely dangerous. Tsumugu was there this night. No matter where you look at, there are heavily armored soldiers. Harime is probably invincible just like his... what is he, a sister or something? Anyway, we don't have a weapon to kill him or even incapacitate him. That's why we need the scissor blades."

"The scissor blades are still in the water." Ryuko mentions.

"Then we gotta get them out of there." Sanageyama comments.

"What he says. We are still planning out how to do that. You probably wouldn't die if you dive down and start filling your body with water, but you won't be able to see stuff of course, and the flashlights are not strong enough to enlighten the darkness in the water. But we are still planning everything out. Maybe we also approach it completely different, who knows? We are still considering everything." Mikisugi explains.

"Okay." Ryuko answers.

"So, in conclusion we have to do the following. First: Retrieve the scissor blades or develop something as strong as them. Secondly:

Collect life fibers to produce weapons and anti life fiber ammo to combat Neo-REVOCS. Third: Guerilla attacks against Neo-REVOCS. And fourth: Collectin data that could expose Neo-REVOCS. I can't believe the government does not care at all about Neo-REVOCS."

"I wouldn't be surprised if a man like Ichiro Harime has already manipulated them. It wouldn't be the first time seeing life fibers manipulating people after all." Gamagoori mentions.

"Probably." Tsumugu says cold.

"Satsuki, I suggest you keep a low profile for a while - if people find out you are indeed alive and you try to take over REVOCS again, I could imagine panic and confusion in the country and the world and we don't need that right now. We don't know how this Ichiro guy operates, maybe he could use the panic to his advantage as well."

"I see, Mikisugi. I do not like the thought, but it is reasonable." Satsuki answers.

"I don't like it either. Honestly, I prefer a good open battle, but your reputation is pretty bad already and, without any offense, people don't seem to miss you anyway. Cruel enough to just think about it."

"Yes..." Satsuki answers slightly annoyed by that.

Ryuko slowly drifts away from the conversation. Harime. Life Fibers. REVOCS. Scissor blades. These words jump around in her head, burning into it. Ryuko tries to keep them out as they eventually lead to bad head aches. She looks back at Mikisugi, and all of a sudden, Nui Harime stands behind him, with black arms and a kind smile. She looks at Ryuko. Ryuko is paralyzed and snap breathing. The others notice that.

"Everything alright, Ryuko?" Satsuki asks worried. Ryuko looks at Nui. Nui moves her finger from left to right, then puts it onto her

mouth, implying that Ryuko shouldn't say a thing. Ryuko hesitates at first.

"Ryuko?" Satsuki asks again. She blinks several times. Nui is gone.

"... yeah, I'm okay." she answers. They continue the conversation.

"Well, that's about it then so far. We'll make sure you guys get some good rooms at the command area." Mikisugi says.

"You guys have bath tubs here too?" Nonon asks grinning. Tsumugu looks at Nonon evil.

"We don't." Tsumugu says.

"Too bad."

The day passes. Ryuko, Satsuki and the elite four all got an own room in a hall with eight rooms - two are still free. The rooms are nearly identical, but they do appear pretty solid and useful. A shelf with belts and ammo vests, a little bath room, and other than that there is a bed, a little fridge for snacks and drinks and a second shelf with weapons and other useful stuff. Since the six people are not directly members of Nudist Beach, they are allowed to wear their usual stuff. Satsuki however is in command just like Mikisugi, as Mikisugi knows about Satsuki's good leadership skills and it would be a waste of not using it. Satsuki talks the entire evening with Mikisugi, planning stuff out, explaining the base and so on. Ryuko looks around in the base - something is going on everywhere. Gamagoori does some exercises with Sanageyama, while Nonon sits in the social room at the command area and Houka is at the Research & Development facility, curiously taking a look at everything. Satsuki didn't tell Shiro Iori about what happened with Soroi yet, but she will during the week probably. Right now it's important to make a rough plan.

Around 11 PM, Ryuko wishes her sister a good night. She lays down onto her bed and thinks. Even though the room is warm and cozy,

Ryuko feels cold, and she feels it's kind of wrong to sleep here. She can sometimes hear footsteps outside - guards that patrol the hall. Satsuki sleeps in the room next to Ryuko so whenever something happens, they can meet each other quickly. Being at Nudist Beach feels wrong because Senketsu and Mako was always with her back then. At least the bed is soft and warm. She slowly starts sleeping, even though it's a weird feeling...

During the night...

A huge room is visible. Red life fibers crawl on it's walls, keeping the room solid and intact. They talk to each other in a language a human cannot comprehend. A huge red layer is in the middle of the room, and in front of it are stair like constructs leading up to some sort of throne made out of life fiber, like everything else in this room. A white, humanoid appearing thing sits on it. Then, a sound is audible - something materializes on the red layer. Ichiro slowly appears out of it and bows before the throne.

"High Entity." he says loyal and sinks his head respectfully. The white thing that seems to be called High Entity watches him. It talks to him - apparently with several voices. They all speak together and form one wonderful sounding voice that sounds clear and clean too.

"Harime."

"Kiryuin and Matoi are presumed dead. Neo-REVOCS is mine and the humans are not capable of taking it away." he says calm and satisfied.

"Good."

"However, I fear the exilant seems to have escaped it's prison in the beyond. That was my bad."

"Find Kiryuin and Matoi. Break them apart. We cannot allow them to stop our plans anew. Not after what happened years ago."

"As you wish. What about the exilant?"

"Tear Nui Harime apart. She is not allowed to fight against her own race."

"Yes, High Entity."

"Stand up." the High Entity says. Ichiro stands up, looking proud at it's master. The High Entity splits up into several parts - they are all white. Red fibers move through their bodies, and they start slowly walking around Ichiro.

"We gave you the power of many. Your destiny is to give our species a new home. Be cruel. Show no mercy towards humanity. After killing the primordial life fiber and ending the life of millions of life fibers, they deserve death in the cruelst of ways."

"I have a plan to stop Matoi and to fulfill the wish you gave me. I need your permission for this. You know what I want."

The white entities become one in front of Ichiro, then they watch him.

"We understand." it says. The room lights up slightly yellow and red, and life fibers start singing in the background, slow, quiet, but beautiful and somehow calming. The embodiment of the High Entity takes a few steps back. A humanoid being arises from the red layer between Ichiro and the Entity. It has a yellow-red eye on it's left face part. On the right one, there is just an X. Ichiro smiles curious.

"Use him to your advantage. Destroy him once the time has come. He will wither." the Entity orders it's servant and walks the stairs up back to the throne. The being in front of Ichiro does not have a consciousness. In fact, it's dead. Ichiro touches it's face. It feels soft and warm.

"Senketsu." Ichiro says.

"Matoi's love for her friends will mark her downfall. And you will help me, Senketsu." he smiles and touches Senketsu's face with both hands. Senketsu dematerializes, forming a little ball of life fibers. Ichiro picks it up. This is Senketsu now. A single white fiber moves in the ball.

"Go, Harime. Fulfill your target. Let us know about your progress. We will watch you proudly."

"Yes, High Entity." he answers. Briefly after, Ichiro dematerializes and becomes one with the red layer again. He appears like one fiber out of many. The Entity sits down onto it's throne, calm and watchful. In front of the throne you can see space - it's a huge wall that is transparent from inside. Outside, there are life fibers.

"Thousands have died due to the deeds of the Kiryuin daughters. Humanities end will be cruel... just like ours was cruel..."

Two Sides Of The Same Coin

AN: Hello, DanieD00 here. Thanks for all the positive comments regarding the story so far. It motivates me A LOT (!) to see reviews as I come from a website where the Kill La Kill fandom is literally dead, so seeing some nice comments is really something motivating. I swear, chapters are gonna get longer and longer, I mean, this one has 12,707 words! But I assure you it's gonna be a really fun and cool one. Not wanna spoil anything but let's just say we gonna see some cool action today! :) Thanks again for all the reviews, I'm super thankful for more. But now, have fun with the new chapter and let me know what you think! :D

Satsuki looks up to the sky. Like the others, she can see thousands of effects and lights in space. Ryuko is fighting against her mother Ragyo. Senketsu Kisaragi versus Shinra Koketsu. Down here, the battle looks impressive. Just like Satsuki, everyone down here is naked, watching daughter and mother fighting. If Ryuko fails, this is the end of the world, and Ragyo will win. A cruel fate for the world. Satsuki's heart beat is high. The tension in the air is thick, and stressful. Dead life fibers lie around at the school yard.

Ryuko sustains more and more hits by Ragyo. The power of Shinra Koketsu is incomprehensible, as she has to experience with her own body. Her wounds are bad, ugly, and the pain is getting worse with each hit. Ragyo laughs, because she feels powerful, invincible, knowing that Ryuko trying to defeat her mother is desperate. Ryuko does not have chance, not even with Senketsu Kisaragi, but she has to endure the pain to become stronger.

"What's happening up there?!" someone asks in the background.

"Matoi needs to win!" another one screams. Satsuki moves forward a few steps. The four deva notice how high her pulse is. Satsuki would never have goosebumps, which is why they can tell how she feels right now. After Ragyo stops attacking Ryuko, it seems as if Ryuko is

about to charge an attack by herself. But all of a sudden, everything turns dark. No one is able to move. Time... has stopped. Satsuki however is able to move. White life fibers appear in the area. They break through the walls, the ground, nearly everything, and Satsuki is now able to see a slightly clearer what is happening up in space. Now she can actually see Ryuko and Ragyo - they are as big as ants, but they are visible. It's indescribable. It's not possible, and yet it somehow works.

Ryuko is unable to move, but she can move her head around. A light appears. Ryuko turns her head with all the energy she has left.

"What are you planning, Ryuko?" Nui asks curious and throws away her Parasol. She walks towards Ryuko and looks into her face.

"You wouldn't hurt mama, would you?" she asks. Ragyo is able to move. She smiles at Ryuko.

"What the..." Ryuko mumbles unsure.

"Senketsu?" she asks.

"I can't do anything!" he answers stressed. Nui walks in front of Ragyo and looks at Ryuko. Her black arms lighten up in red, blue and green colours. First, Nui seems a bit confused, then she seems angry.

"You truly are evil, Ryuko." Nui says annoyed, taking a step at the side, so that Ragyo can go to Ryuko. She touches Ryuko's cheek with a hand.

"Look at you, child. How pathetic." Ragyo says slow, and quiet, and then she activates the satellite that controls the life fibers which covered the earth. Ryuko watches the COVERS slowly moving towards earth.

"No..." she mumbles scared. Nui stands next to Ryuko, holding her arms behind her back.

"Satsuki!" Ryuko says worried. She tries to move and free herself from whatever is holding her back from moving, but it does not work. Nothing works.

Suddenly, the earth starts to lighten up in red colours. Scissor blades appear. Nui grabs them and walks back to Ryuko.

"I can't even smile, that's how evil you are, Ryuko. Shinra Koketsu is my master piece." Nui threatens, holding the blades at Ryuko's Torso. Ryuko bites her teeth together and tries to free herself again.

"And no one destroys my masterpiece." she says angry and cuts Ryuko's body in half. Blood flows out of both body parts, but slowly, as they are still in space. Ryuko's eye become larger, the pupils unbelievable tiny, and the pain is one that cannot be described. It embraces her. Briefly after, both parts of Ryuko fall down to earth. Senketsu is crying.

Satsuki watches something falling from the air. The CLOUDS at the sky slowly move towards her and her friends. They start to light up in red colours, and the noises they produce are awful. And then, Satsuki recognizes it's Ryuko falling from the sky. She can't believe what she sees. Fire appears as Ryuko's body parts enter earth's atmosphere. Her younger sister starts to burn painfully. The skin burns, dissolves, becomes ashes, the life fibers that keep her together slowly burn away and everything that stays is the thought of losing. This is the end. She drops a tear.

"Satsu... ki" Ryuko mumbles one last time, looking into space. And then, her face incinerates, the skin burns down, and shortly after, she finally becomes nothing more than dust. Satsuki falls down onto the ground.

"Ryuko..." Satsuki mumbles sad. Everyone around Satsuki cannot move. Time has stopped for them, or better, they stopped while time is running again. The earth shatters, fire catches the ground, and the CLOUDS slowly heat up. Satsuki notices how Ragyo looks down at her daughter, disappointed, yet with a sublime smile. The fires burn

away Satsuki's friends, and as it catches up on Satsuki, setting her body on fire, with the heat overcoming her, almost making her explode, Satsuki screams.

"RYUKO!" she screams scared and looks around. She finds herself back in her room in the Nudist Beach headquarter. Satsuki stands up quickly, wearing a blue Pyjama, then walks out of the room. The feet touch the cold ground. Quickly running to the room of Ryuko, she opens it, peaking into it. Ryuko sleeps well and calm right now, and she lies very cuddly and comfortable. Satsuki is relieved and smiles slightly. Then she closes the door carefully and walks back to her room, trying to sleep again. She looks at the ceiling. The bed is comfortable and warm. Did she wake up someone by that scream? It doesn't matter. As long as Ryuko is okay. Time to sleep some more. At the very least, Satsuki is calm now that her nightmare is over, at least for this night.

The next four days pass quiet. Neo-REVOCS activated more factories in Japan and the world, while Nudist Beach gathers more information about their opponent. Thanks to Satsuki, Nudist Beach can mark important factories and have a good idea about how rich Neo-REVOCS is and how capable it can be at the moment. Ryuko meanwhile more or less just walks around the entire time, mostly with Satsuki, even though she can't start a lot with the boring paperwork like talking. Attack this, attack there, defend this position, steal something there... she thinks it's boring and it annoys her that she and Satsuki cannot just attack something. But that's not possible without a proper weapon for at least Satsuki. They always work together. In the meantime, Houka tries to look out for security gaps inside the system of Neo-REVOCS to get access to their data and see what they are planning. However, it seems as if the system is well protected, better than he expected, and so it probably will take a while to get access. Iori has heard about the death of his uncle Soroi. The young tailor didn't change much, he did grow a few centimeter, but that's pretty much it. He comforts himself with the thought that Soroi would have died sooner or later anyway because of his age, but of course he is sad about his death. He isn't the kind

of person that would cry though, but it's clear he feels a bit different at the moment...

"Welcome to Neo-REVOCS. Enjoy your stay!" is audible via speakers. It's 5:30 AM right now. The industrial area of Neo-REVOCS changed fairly fast after almost a week - noble white walls with red grounds, flowers everywhere, a nice scent in the air, and dozens of heavily armed guards to make sure no one enters Neo-REVOCS without permission, or leaves it with stolen goods. The young Masaru Yamamoto and a group of Neo-REVOCS workers head out of the main building and enter one of the huge transport areas located around the complex. Besides the main building, there are about twelve more towers which are however smaller than the main building. All of them contain stitching halls that produce new cloths, but it is said that somewhere in the area there are also secret laboratories to experiment with life fibers. And a complex like this probably also has some kind of reactor that produces energy for all the buildings here. It surely is an impressive area every CEO would dream of. Masaru's workers carry a locked up chest. Masaru himself wears a nice red shirt and white trousers, his shoes also seem very expensive and noble. In addition to that, he appears rather serious and grim, although it only works partially, as he still seems very innocent and kind. And the glasses don't help either. Two guards open a transporter. The guards at Neo-REVOCS pretty much look the same, most of them wear batons and bulletproof vests while their clothes are red and white. Some of the guards however carry Submachineguns. Masaru's workers deliver the chest to the transporter, after that, they walk out of the transporter again.

"Make sure the chest arrives in the exhibition building of Ôsaka. Believe me, you don't want to anger our CEO." Masaru threatens and walks back to the main building. A few guards enter the transporter and start driving. At the same time, on various other parts of the huge complex, more and more transporters leave the area. Apparently they all seem to deliver various goods, but what could it be?

Ryuko and Satsuki find themselves back in the arsenal of Nudist Beach at around 1 PM. Weapon lockers are everywhere, ammo crates and even a few DTRs are located. The arsenal is large and huge ladders lead to the upper shelves which contain more weapons, like Katanas or other melee weapons.

"So how did Iori react?" Ryuko asks her sister.

"Well... I suppose he accepted it. Iori usually keeps a calm attitude even if something goes wrong, but when I told him Soroi died because of this... Harime... I haven't seen him so quiet yet."

"He and his uncle did come along well. What about you?" Ryuko asks worried.

"... it's okay. Soroi did not deserve that. At least not in such a cruel and dishonoring way."

"That's true."

"Well, I suppose we won't be able to visit the cinema the next weeks, hm?" Satsuki asks and smiles briefly, then becomes serious again.

"Ha, yeah... I guess we'll just watch it on DVD. And look it this way, not you had to pay, you paid with the money from REVOCS." Ryuko grins.

"Yes." she answers. Iori appears. He wears a white coat, and he also still has his orange mask.

"Lady Satsuki. Miss Matoi." Iori says calm and asks both of them to follow him. He leads them through the huge arsenal up to a chamber that contains prototype weapons and armors. Ryuko notices experiments about larger and more effective DTRs, or blueprints for the zeppelin like airship that is being constructed and worked on up on the island. Just like the rest of the base, everything here is pretty much made out of steel corridors and grounds. Iori opens a glass

closet, and a metallic shelf moves out slowly. Two pieces of clothing are in it.

"Mikisugi asked me to work on a few clothes for you, I of course followed his orders. Lady Satsuki, your cloths, or better, combat armor, is finished, while your's, Miss Matoi, is still in development. However, you can already take a look at how it probably will look like once it's done." lori says calm. He grabs Satsukis armor and shows her the look of it.

"This is a light armor made out of flexible alloys." lori starts to explain. The armor looks very noble, but simple. It has white colors, and the material that covers the alloy feels like silk, and the alloys can sustain a good amount of damage too. It seems like a few life fibers are fused into the armor as well - other than that there's only the alloy and solid cloth. If Satsuki wears it, her shoulders and the upper body area would be well protected. The area around the belly however is free and not protected, to ensure that Satsuki can move fast and stay flexible, as while the alloys are able to stretch a bit, it would definitely make everything more difficult if the belly is covered as well. There are a few blue and yellow stripes as well. In general, the armor looks really well done and compact, as one could expect from a experienced tailor like lori. Satsuki takes it and feels it. It feels really good.

The so called "Wrath-Regalia" protects the upper and lower body of the wearer fairly well against melee weapons and especially environmental hazards like fire and acid. Small caliber bullets won't penetrate the armor, however, I assume you won't get shot anyway thanks to the great flexibility. The area around the belly is the only weak spot. Of course it is risky, but it's necessary to ensure maximal precision and flexibility. But since you've always been very agil and calm, I assume this won't be much of a problem for you, Lady Satsuki. I also have a second prototype which I am working on at the moment. I'm trying to develop a version that is compatible with your suit. That way you do not have to constantly change clothes and can adapt quick according to the current situation. And of course I'm

looking for some improvements regarding the armor itself." Iori explains. Satsuki is impressed. Ryuko however is bored.

"Good work, Iori." Satsuki says satisfied. Iori nods and puts the Wrath-Regalia away. As he is about to talk about Ryuko's armor, the speakers of the base turn on.

"Ryuko Matoi and Satsuki Kiryuin are ordered to the command center of Hall-A." is audible.

"I'm afraid your armor has to wait, Miss Matoi." Iori notices.

"That's cool. Call me Ryuko by the way. Miss Matoi almost sounds like I'm some sort of noble woman." Ryuko grins.

"As you wish, Ryuko." Iori answers. Ryuko and Satsuki quickly go to the command center where Houka sits at the huge monitor. Several red dots are visible on the monitor, and most of them move to Ôsaka and the area around it. Houka looks fascinated at them. Next to Houka, Tsumugu and Mikisugi watch the monitor, although Tsumugu closed his arms, thinking about something. Ryuko and Satsuki arrive at the command center.

"We've been called?" Satsuki says calm but resolute.

"Yeah. Your buddy Houka wants to talk." Mikisugi answers. Houka zooms closer onto the monitor.

"Houka?"

"Satsuki, I've already told Mikisugi, but you should take a look at this. This morning we got information about Neo-REVOCS sending several convoys through and to Ôsaka. Most of them will pass Ôsaka, I assume, but I'm certain that there will be a few that will stay here for a while." Houka explains. Tsumugu looks at both sisters.

"Well what are we waiting for then? Let's kick some asses!" Ryuko says excited.

"Matoi, let me tell you two things. First: Attacking them without a plan will alarm these clowns and ruin everything. And secondly: we should make sure that we can destroy as much convoys as possible. That's why you are here. We will plan a few ambushes. Both of you will participate." Tsumugu explains. Ryuko nods slightly. After that, the planning starts...

At the same time, Hoomaru sits in the central room of the old REVOCS base, and she can see various convoys moving too, as she still has access to the system of Neo-REVOCS. Hoomaru is more or less alone in the base, there are a few clones left that hang around or play a bit, but other than that, not much is going on. Hoomaru feels uncomfortable but at least the clones are polite towards her. More polite than Nui ever was at the very least. Via the security cameras she can see Nui and a few of her clones walking back into the base. Her clones carry bags full of plundered goods.

"Would you look at that... Harime dispatched several convoys." Hoomaru mumbles quietly. Briefly after, Nui enters the room with five of her clones, and all of them seem to be relaxed and happy.

"This was super awesome, mistress!" a clone says happily.

"The way you shot this soldier was soooooooo funny!" another clone says grinning. Nui goes to Hoomaru.

"Heyyyyyyy Hoomaru! What are you doing? Not much obviously." Nui grins and looks at the monitor Hoomaru was looking at.

"Do you want to hunt down more Neo-REVOCS convoys?"

"Of course. It's fun to hunt down humans and life fibers!" she answers.

"Good, then listen up. Ôsaka isn't far from here and there is a huge convoy moving to the city, seems like it's well guarded, maybe you want to catch it?" Hoomaru asks.

"Wow, Hoomaru, you are really smart today, and that has to mean something! But sure!" Nui grins. Hoomaru shakes her head annoyed. Nui giggles as a reaction as she thinks Hoomaru is just funny to talk to.

"Thanks for the compliment, Harime." Hoomaru says annoyed.

"Nwaa, don't act like that now, I think a few jokes between two friends can light up the mood really well, don't you think?" Nui answers smiling.

"Look, Harime. I don't like you. But I do work with you together because this Ichiro clown probably killed Satsuki, and I don't like that. Would you PLEASE stop harassing me the entire time?" Hoomaru answers annoyed. It's simply annoying to always hear Nui mocking about her. After five years without REVOCS, Hoomaru definitely changed and her confidence became stronger. She's done with being insulted the entire time. Nui smiles confused.

"Ooooh, someone is insulted!"

"I'm not insulted. Just annoyed. You want to get that convoy now or do you prefer to annoy your "friend?" Hoomaru asks.

"Haha, I'm on my way already, thanks dear little Hoomaru!" Nui answers. Her clones store away the bags with loot - life fibers, probably produced by Ichiro himself, cloths and other materials and here and there a function weapon of Neo-REVOCS. Nui takes some of the life fibers and stores them inside her fingers, so that she can quickly get them. They serve as ammo for her rifle. Her fiber rifle has changed - pink color with a few hearts here and there on the barrel and a huge blade below the muzzle so that she can perform melee attacks. Nui and her clones start moving out of the base. Eight clones wear needle blades, four of them the other fiber rifles that were in the base...

Two hours pass by. Nudist Beach's plan is as followed: several squads will be placed in and around Ôsaka to perform ambushes as

soon as they spot a convoy. Since the convoys are rather slow and have an equal speed, ambushes can be timed rather easily. While the four deva have to fight in Nudist Beach clothing since Iori wasn't able to produce uniforms for them, Satsuki can use her Wrath-Regalia. Ryuko however is forced to wear Nudist Beach clothes - a belt and a little ammo vest to hide the sexual parts. She does not like the idea at all which is pretty obvious as she looks annoyed and ashamed the entire time. On the other hand she probably just has to get used to it again. Just like Satsuki, Ryuko has a Katana for melee combat which was extra crafted for her and her sister. It is infused with a few life fibers that have been stolen by Neo-REVOCS which means they have a good quality as well. Therefore, the Katanas are more powerful than the normal ones, even though they are not as strong as Bakuzan or the scissor blades. They however should be enough to damage life fibers badly, although they won't be able to kill them. Both sisters sit in the empty room of a civilian transporter. Takarada's scouts watch the area and the convoys, that's how Nudist Beach knows the situation exactly. Satsuki waits calmly, while Ryuko is slightly excited. She looks at her Katana.

"Kinda weird to have a Katana with me." Ryuko mentions.

"You think so?"

"Mhm. Yeah, I kinda liked the old scissor blades more. Well... anyway..."

"I see."

"Did you know there's a festival in Nagoya next week? With huge markets and attractions and stuff?"

"Oh really? I did not."

"Yep. You think we both could take a day off to take a look around there? I know, I know, this probably sounds childish and there's probably more important stuff, but... you know, maybe we should try

to still have some fun even though there's a maniac leading your company... uhm..."

"I understand, Ryuko. I don't know. I'd like to visit it, that's for sure. You remember the shooting range from last year where you hit all the signs and won? It was a huge teddy bear." Satsuki grins. Ryuko laughs.

"Oh yeah, I still remember it. Felt super warm and cuddly somehow, even though it wasn't really mine."

"What did you do with it?"

"Sold it for a bunch of Yen. Little kid was happy after their parents bought it from me." Ryuko smiles. Satsuki nods.

"That's nice." she answers. Someone knocks at the door. The transporter has stopped apparently.

"Ready?" Satsuki asks. Ryuko nods. Both of them exit the transporter and walk to the door, which opens shortly after. They are at a warehouse near a huge plaza of Ôsaka. A Nudist Beach soldier talks to them.

"Lady Satsuki, Matoi. We received a message a few minutes ago. The convoy you are about to attack apparently has stopped here and delivered it's goods into a warehouse a street away. It probably is well guarded, you might want to sneak in first and see what is in there. There's no need to alarm the guards if there is nothing of interest." the soldier says. Both sisters nod.

"Sure thing." Ryuko answers. The soldier points with his finger into the direction where the warehouse is supposed to be. It isn't far away indeed. Ryuko and Satsuki quickly move to the little alleys and walk around the huge plaza where they could get spotted easily. The alleys of Ôsaka kind of remind Satsuki of the ones from Tokyo, but unlike Tokyo, no one walks around here, simply because there aren't as many people living here. The alleys are still small and dirty

though. Since the buildings are huge, they give a good cover and protect from the sun which can make spotting both Ryuko and Satsuki easier for Neo-REVOCS units. It's cold here and there is ruined clothes everywhere, as well as a few rats and a few empty cans of food. They arrive at a seemingly abandoned building. It's windows are broken, however, there is a ladder they could use to get up to the building. Ryuko helps Satsuki jump up the ladder. Satsuki can jump high, but sometimes it's easier to have a helping hand. Satsuki climbs up and helps Ryuko get up here as well. After that, both sisters walk through the building - it's completely empty and indeed abandoned. The walls are black and some are moldy too. However, it gives a good oversight of the front view of the warehouse they want to investigate. They take a closer look.

There are a few vehicles of Neo-REVOCS in red and white colors. The thing that strikes the most are the soldiers they can see - the so called Ashigaru units of Neo-REVOCS. They present the main part of Neo-REVOCS private army. Ashigaru units are easy to recruit and have basic knowledge about combat and fighting with melee and range weapons. Their armor isn't the best and only their torso is protected, but it's enough to combat most threats fairly well. Their design reminds a bit of the actual Ashigaru units from the 16th century back in the Sengoku era. They were the main part of the army of the Shogun back then.

"Light infantry. They seem to use Katanas and Wakizashis. Some of them wear submachineguns." Ryuko mentions. Satsuki nods.

"Mhm. And they seem like they don't want to go so quickly. We should take a look and see if we can get into the building quietly. Maybe we can knock out a few of them." Satsuki considers.

"Sure." Ryuko answers.

Upon that, Ryuko and Satsuki leave the building and walk through a group of civilians on the main street, near the warehouse, so that they won't be spotted by the Ashigaru. Satsuki looks for a way to get behind the building, and she quickly finds one that has less guards

than the front. It's not as well guarded as it probably could or even should be, especially since Neo-REVOCS probably knows that Nudist Beach is their opponent. However, they also probably don't know that their base is in Ôsaka. In any case, drawing attention would be bad, since the warehouse is located in one of the bigger and richer parts of Ôsaka, which is kind of weird. Warehouses usually are in industrial areas. Something has to be in the warehouse that is more worth than just simple material. Arriving at the back yard of the warehouse, Ryuko and Satsuki move from wall to wall until they are about 12 meters away from the back entrance. They hide behind a few crates. Ryuko peeks out of her cover and see's two Ashigaru-gunners, armed with Submachineguns, patrolling the area. Just as Satsuki wants to draw her Katana, Ryuko holds her off as the gunners move along due to an explosion and a few shots nearby.

"Wait. I thought the next group is in the financial district?" Ryuko asks confused and quiet.

"I have no idea. But it doesn't matter. We should move." Satsuki suggests and moves forward. She holds her Katana ready for an attack by holding her hand tight onto the grip of the weapon. That way she can perform a quick slash attack. The area is rather quiet and empty, it's the back yard of a warehouse after all. Crates, barrels, a little hut for guards to take a break, and fences. Civilians watch Ryuko and Satsuki but move along, although some do take a closer look at Ryuko because her... outfit is very... unusual. Especially during winter. Satsuki carefully opens the door and takes a look, while Ryuko watches their back to see if guards come along. Two normal guards sit at a desk in the room she's looking into. No Ashigaru whatsoever, simply two normal men, playing a game of arm wrestling. They haven't noticed Satsuki. She shakes her head and opens the door further, but slow and quiet. Carefully, she and Ryuko sneak to the men. Ryuko's big sister points her left hand to the right guard, making clear for Ryuko she should attack the right one.

Both guards seem to have a lot of fun.

"Did you do exercises or what!?" the right guard asks confused and keeps pressing.

"Hah, as if I need exercises for a dumbass like you!" the left guard grins.

"Dumbass? Who do you call a dumbass!?" the right guard asks.

"Yo, what's up, guys?" Ryuko asks smiling. The guards turn around to Ryuko and Satsuki with a surprised face. Quickly, Ryuko punches the guards face, knocking him unconscious. Satsuki kicks into the face of the left guard, knocking this one unconscious as well.

"We should have waited a minute, I wanted to see who would win." Ryuko grins.

"Watching two fools performing such an childish activity is pathetic." Satsuki answers and moves into the next room.

"... childish activity, I'm Satsuki, I'm serious as fuck, look at me." Ryuko mumbles jokingly and chuckles. Not much is going on in this room, and so, Ryuko follows Satsuki. Satsuki stands in the door frame, and she seems impressed.

"What's up, Satsuki?" Ryuko asks.

"Is that truly a warehouse?" she asks confused and walks into the room. Ryuko follows her and raises her eyebrows.

If this is a warehouse, it would be a very weird one. This building appears to be some kind of exhibition building, dedicated to various works of the REVOCS corporation. It's quiet here, and the room has a nice temperature. The rooms itself are also very clean for some reason, and there seems to be no guard around.

"That's strange." Ryuko says.

"Mhm." Satsuki hums and looks around. Since the "warehouse" has several floors, there's probably more upstairs. Satsuki curiously

walks to a few vitrines and takes a look - inside them are a few well tailored cloths, scars and even a nice looking school uniform. Just as you could expect from Neo-REVOCS corporate design and architecture, the rooms here have white walls and red grounds. This all looks very noble and expensive, there's no doubt about that, and polished as well. Ryuko pinches her eyes and is suspicious. After that, she takes a look at the various rooms. There is one vitrine with something that looks almost like a COVERS. Seemingly, it was however just the basic version that you could wear normally, and so, Ryuko guesses it was some kind of blueprint to orientate for the finished product later on. She also notices a overly huge wedding dress in which two or three people could fit in.

"Who would wear something like this?" Ryuko wonders and walks around. Satsuki investigates the rooms for useful items and stuff like crates with life fibers or weapons, although chances are low they could find weapons in an exhibition building.

"I'll take a look upstairs, Satsuki." Ryuko mentions.

"Alright." Satsuki answers and nods. Upon that, Ryuko arrives in a huge hall. There is a huge entrance door, and on the left and right side of the door are windows. A few Ashigaru-swordsmen watch the entrance, but they of course won't see Ryuko as long as she doesn't make noises. Quickly, Ryuko decides to walk up the stairs. More shots are fired outside, but the Ashigaru-swordsmen seem to be calm.

"They do make have a good time out there, that's for sure." Ryuko thinks and arrives in the first floor. The rooms here look very polished. The few windows here let the few sun rays in, as it's cloudy outside. There's no snowfall though. Curiously, Ryuko looks around. However, there's only more boring Neo-REVOCS stuff. More cloths, scarfs, in general every kind of cloths you could possibly imagine. There is also a portrait of Ragyo Kiryuin. On that, her mother looks very impressive and noble, with rainbow colours behind her head, and dozens of REVOCS-workers below her, looking at the viewer proudly. Ryuko sighs looking at her mother. She gave Ragyo a

chance for redemption after the destruction of Shinra Koketsu but she did not take that chance, but decided to take her life. Her daughter is not sad or anything, just... very disappointed. That happens every time she sees a picture of her. It's disappointment about being thrown away like trash, especially since she never had the chance of finding out what it's like to be loved by two caring parents. The only one that has a slight idea is probably Satsuki, but then again, Satsuki hates Ragyo. However, it surely also shows that Ryuko became more mature over time for not hating her mother but actually giving her a chance even though she could hate her, and that hate would be justified because of Ragyo's actions in the past. Suddenly, Ryuko hears steps in the second floor, and there is something else that also makes noises for some reason. Carefully, Ryuko walks up, holding the grip of her Katana tight for a slash attack.

Arriving in the second floor, there are a few empty rooms. Some windows are here, and a few crates with materials, but it does not seem to be life fibers and therefore it's nothing useful. Apart from that, the room itself is badly lighted, which is strange to Ryuko. However, there is a huge door which she opens. Inside, she finds only one interesting item: a large chest in the center of the room that is on a little podium, and it seems to move around for some reason. It also makes noises which makes it even weirder to Ryuko.

"The fuck...?" she mumbles confused and walks towards the chest. Other than that, there really are just a few windows and crates and another huge door behind the podium, about 10 meters away. It's closed however. Ryuko grabs the chest with her hands tightly. It feels strange and it gives her a weird but kind of comfortable feeling - one she hasn't experienced in a long time.

"... what...?" she mumbles and opens the chest carefully and slow. Whatever is inside that chest, it stopped rumbling around. It seems like there is some kind of piece of clothing. As the first light flows into the chest, it gets even more obvious that there is something to wear inside. Suddenly, the chest bangs open, and said cloths jump out!

"AHHHH! THANK YOU, IT WAS SO DARK INSIDE THERE, I WANTED TO GET OUT OF THERE THE ENTIRE TIME BUT I COULDN'T BECAUSE..." the piece screams and jumps onto Ryuko, which leads Ryuko to fall down. It's sleeves hold Ryuko's arms tight.

"HEY, HEY! WHAT THE HELL ARE..." Ryuko screams back, until she notices what sits on her, jumping around hysterically.

"... you..." she finishes.

It seems to be a suit. She looks into it's eye. No one says a thing. They just look at each other for a moment, and they both have looks full of disbelief and surprisement. Then, Ryuko's eyes start glowing up a bit.

"Senketsu..." she mumbles in disbelief.

"... Ryuko..." Senketsu mumbles back.

They continue to look into each others eyes.

And one more moment.

And another one. And then, Ryuko starts laughing happily.

"SENKETSU!" she laughs happily.

"RYUKO!" Senketsu screams back. Ryuko hugs Senketsu as tight as she can. A few tears drop out of her eyes full of happiness. Ryuko simply laughs happily, and Senketsu is also giggling, enjoying the hug.

"How the hell is this possible, how... like, how..." Ryuko mumbles in disbelief but with a huge smile.

"Ryuko, I don't have any idea, but... I... oh god, Ryuko, I..."

"It's okay, Senketsu! Whatever happened to you, no matter what happened, you're here, and we will find out how you came back,

alright?!"

"Okay, okay, I just..."

"I know, Senketsu! I'm happy too! I just..." and then Ryuko loses it and just cries out of happiness. Her laugh was one of the most beautiful Senketsu has ever heard, and probably one of the most beautiful in her entire life. It was genuine and wonderful. Ryuko never laughed so happily in years. Right now, Ryuko doesn't care at all about how Senketsu is back. All she knows is that this is the real Senketsu. He just looks different now. He sounds like Senketsu. He feels like Senketsu. He even remembers Ryuko. And the grip of his sleeves surely feels the same like back in the days when he was a uniform. This truly is Senketsu.

"Oh my, Ryuko, you do look different. You really grew up, didn't you? But uh... you should wear something." Senketsu says. If he would have a face, he would grin now. At least Ryuko is able to hear out if he smiles or grins. She just does for some reason. Ryuko chuckles.

"Oh, that? Well, you're the one who burned up, you idiot!" Ryuko giggles and hugs Senketsu once more. Senketsu hugs her back.

"Wait until Satsuki see's you, oh boy, she's gonna make eyes, no doubt about that!" Ryuko grins. Senketsu laughs.

"Well, I hope so, I want to see her again too." her friend answers and holds her one more moment. Senketsu feels wonderful, warm and cuddly. Ryuko nestles her face one more time onto Senketsu left shoulder where his missing eye, marked by an X, is located. Senketsu's main parts, the eye and the shoulders are similar to his old version, however, instead of a uniform, he appears to be a black suit now. His eye is like a circle now, and not like a square anymore. There is also a gauntlet for the left hand, with red and white colours, and black pants with a belt.

"Note: This Kamui has to be delivered to Neo-REVOCS immediately." Ryuko reads loud.

"Yeah right, fuck that." Ryuko grins and takes off her belt and ammo vest, making her naked. She takes the trousers in the chest, however they seem to not be part of Senketsu directly but just a little addition. However, the trousers fit to Senketsu's apparel. The trousers are black with red pockets on the right and left side around the hips.

"You need someone that will wear you." Ryuko grins and picks up Senketsu. She quickly puts him on, as well as the gauntlet and the trousers. There is a red needle on the gauntlet, which is also very similar to the old Senketsu. Senketsu fits perfectly and comfortable. For one moment, she just stops thinking about the world and how it looks like out there. No Neo-REVOCS. No Nudist Beach. No bad things. Just her and her friend. That's all she thinks about right now. And it makes her happy. Senketsu is the only important thing right now. And that is okay. She takes a look at herself.

"Wow... who would have thought I'd look like one of those business people? Satsuki's gonna love it probably. Senketsu, man, I thought you'd be a rebel like me!" Ryuko laughs.

"I am! But I guess I gotta develop somehow, right?" he answers and chuckles.

"Haha... man... if I would have known that you were here, Senketsu, I..."

"I know, Ryuko. I probably would have jumped out of that dark chest and plagued everyone in the building if I would have known you'd be around here." Senketsu answers relieved. Ryuko quickly takes a look outside the building. Ashigaru-swordsmen and gunners walk around, and apparently there is a little fire a few hundred meters away. From here, you can see one of the most memorable buildings of Ôsaka - the Arboretum of Ôsaka. Normally, an Arboretum is a huge garden with exotic flowers that takes up a huge landscape, however, this Arboretum is actually inside a building, and there are glass walls everywhere. Everyone can look into it and outside. It

looks beautiful from here. The construction of the Arboretum was financed by Takarada. Who else, of course.

"We gotta get to Satsuki, Senketsu. She's gonna be so surprised when she see's you..."

"Wait until you see me, Ryuko love." Ryuko suddenly hears. Ryuko turns around. The door that was closed is open, and a light turns on. Her eyes advance. She was happy. Until now. Now she's getting angry.

That's Nui Harime. She giggles and puts away her Parasol. Red fibers move through her scar. Suddenly, she pulls out her fiber rifle and starts playing around with it, until she holds it tight and in a defensive form.

"You..."

"Surprised to see you around here, sweet heart." Nui grins. Ryuko knows this is the true Nui. She draws her Katana quickly and starts running towards Nui.

"GET OVER HERE YOU BITCH!" Ryuko screams. Nui laughs and walks back. With the attached blade she destroys the wall behind her and jumps out. Concrete and stones fall apart, and Nui lands onto a roof. She wants to run away apparently.

"HARIME!" Ryuko screams and follows her quickly. The Ashigaru-swordsmen notice the noises and look up. They can see both Nui and Ryuko running on the roof.

"That's Harime and Matoi! GET THEM!" one of the Ashigaru says. A group of Ashigaru-swordsmen and gunners start following them on the street, while Ryuko and Nui chase each other on the rooftops of Ôsaka. Satsuki also noticed the noises and runs up the stairs to see what it was. Nui climbs up a wall and jumps towards another wall, breaking it open with her rifle blade. Nui lands in a huge library where dozens of people sit around right now, reading books. She

jumps onto a desk and uses it as a head start for another jump, reaching a railing above her.

"Hey, what the hell is wrong with you?!" a civilian screams angry. Ryuko arrives and dodges around the people who are genuinely confused about what is happening here, then, Ryuko jumps onto the desk and up to the railing as well.

"Sorry!" Ryuko calls to the civilian who tries to throw a book onto her, but he misses. Nui waits at a door that leads out to the terrace of the library, playing around with her rifle. Ryuko see's Nui and runs towards her, with Nui showing out her tongue briefly, leaning her right arm onto the rifle which serves as a support so that she doesn't fall.

"Come on, slowpoke!" Nui provokes and kicks open the door, taking the rifle with her and jumping onto another roof. Nui slides down the roof. Bricks fall down and dust whirls up, and with the speed she gained, she jumps onto the next roof. Ryuko follows her. Small concrete walls are next to her, it seems like this is a room in construction.

"Try to stay calm, Ryuko, your blood boils!" Senketsu says worried. Ryuko doesn't care. Suddenly, Nui jumps into the second floor of the Arboretum of Ôsaka. Ashigaru-swordsmen climb up ladders and stairs to reach at least Ryuko. Ryuko jumps into the second floor as well and looks around. Exotic flowers, beautiful gardens, little trees and bushes, and there is even a little fountain. The civilians are already panicking and run out of the room, especially after they see how angry Ryuko is. She holds her Katana ready but in a defensive form.

"Good! Now let's see where she is!" Senketsu says as he notices Ryuko trying to stay calm.

"Yeah, Senketsu. Hey, Nui!" Ryuko screams annoyed. She hasn't left the building apparently, as Ryuko can hear her giggling. This makes Ryuko even more angry.

"COME OUT AND FIGHT ALREADY!" Ryuko screams.

"Gladly!" Nui says and jumps out of her cover, she was behind a tree. She attacks Ryuko with a quick slash attack. Ryuko is able to parry the attack in one last moment. Sparks fly, and a powerful noise is audible as both blades clash together. Ryuko slashes back with her Katana, Nui blocks however and attacks again, swinging from the left side. The attack is strong enough to destroy Ryuko's posture, and for a brief moment, she struggles. Nui seems to attack less precise now and much more chaotic and destructive. She's probably angry too, even if she doesn't show it. Nui charges another attack, but Ryuko jumps back to gain strength for the Katana again. And another attack, and another one, but Ryuko dodges them all and hits Nui at her left arm. Blood flows out of her arm.

"HOW THE FUCK ARE YOU STILL ALIVE, YOU LITERALLY CHOPPED YOUR HEAD OFF!" Ryuko screams angry.

"I could ask you the same question, little hero!" Nui provokes annoyed and dodges an attack of Ryuko. Ryuko hits the window wall next to them, leading to the glasses to break apart. Having a chance of a hit, Nui uses the buttstock of her rifle to hit Ryuko's face, which causes her to stumble back and into the little fountain. She is completely soaked, and her hair feels sticky. Nui attacks a second time, but now with the blade. Ryuko dodges, Nui hits the fountain. The fountain breaks apart. The blonde psychopath starts laughing, enjoying the view of the soaked Ryuko.

"I've had it with you now..." Ryuko mumbles and holds up her left hand, forming it to a fist, then moving the needle to the end and pulling it out. Nui takes a few steps back and watches Ryuko with an excited face expression. Ryuko moans due to the pain that flows through her body. Senketsu transforms into something else - life fibers cover up Ryuko's entire body, little needles are inserted into the skin, draining blood and her hair becomes longer, with red streaks everywhere. Her power grows immensely, just like five years ago. She forms fists and tenses her muscles to fight against the pain, and she bites her teeth together, until the transformation is

finally done. The red light caused through the transformation vanquishes, and Ryuko stands in front of Nui again.

"Life fibers... synchronized... KAMUI: SENKETSU!" she screams full of power and strength and looks at Nui. Still excited, Nui looks at Senketsu. Senketsu became a huge dress like armor painted in black, with red stripes on the arms and torso, and the lower part of the armor looks like thorns. This truly is an exciting view, and it shows that this version of Senketsu seemingly is more rebellious and chaotic than the old one. Nui's smile gets bigger.

"Senketsu Azami..." she mumbles excited and holds her rifle ready. She takes out a few red bullets and holds up her rifle. Red smoke arises from the side of the weapon, and a loading chamber appears. Quickly but precisely, Nui loads her weapon, and closes the loading chamber again. Red smoke leaves the muzzle of the weapon.

"Shinra Koketsu was my masterpiece. I'm gonna make sure you'll pay for it." Nui says furious and unlocks the weapon, noticeable by a satisfying "Kling."

Satsuki arrives at the rooftop of the exhibition building and watches Ryuko and Nui fighting at the window walls of the Arboretum of Ōsaka.

"I can't believe this." Satsuki says annoyed and pulls out her Katana. Then, she jumps from the roof of the building and runs on the roofs of Ōsaka to the Arboretum, until she suddenly hears gunshots from the Ashigaru-gunners that are below her.

"Kiryuin!" one of them screams. Satsuki jumps onto the ground to get some cover while crouching forward, while the bullets fly over her head. The little, maybe 50 centimeter high wall breaks apart thanks to the bullets. Stone's break out and smoke rises up. Quickly, Satsuki moves to the wall in front of her which leads to the library where her sister jumped into, climbing into it. She finds herself back in it. Satsuki stands up and continues running until a few Ashigaru-swordsmen spot her. They draw their Katanas and start chasing her,

but there is no time to fight them, she needs to help her sister now. The civilian from before continued reading at the desk, until Satsuki jumps onto it, destroying it since it got damaged by the jumps of the other two. Annoyed, the civilian throws the book away and leaves the room but gets pushed down by the Ashigaru-swordsmen. Satsuki exits the building. She isn't far away from the Arboretum anymore, where she can clearly see Ryuko fighting against Nui.

"Ryuko!" Satsuki calls and runs to the next roof, until more shots are fired, but they sounded different. More powerful. Satsuki takes cover and peeks out, seeing several Doppelgänger of Nui Harime, armed with REVOCS standard fiber rifles. A Doppelgänger fires at Satsuki, she quickly gets into cover. Satsuki thinks about what she should do now. She hears the clones laughing, until the Ashigaru start shooting, but apparently not at Satsuki, but at the clones. Satsuki moves to the next cover and notices how the clones have a firefight with the Ashigaru units which confuse her.

"She's fighting against her own!?" Satsuki wonders. She briefly thinks and tries to get into the next cover, but a few Ashigaru spotted her and start shooting.

"She's fighting against her own..." Satsuki realizes.

"Interesting..." she mumbles and figures out a way to get to Ryuko.

"Ryuko, you need to calm down, you need to get used to wearing me, your blood boils!" Senketsu says worried. Ryuko does not care however and attacks Nui more and more, but she dodges every attack effortlessly. Then, Ryuko attacks once more by trying an slash attack, moving the Katana over her head for maximum strength. Nui however counters the attack and pushes Ryuko away with the rifle blade.

"How'd you manage to destroy my present for my dearest Lady Ragyo?!" Nui asks angry and attacks. Ryuko dodges.

"Wasn't too hard actually, make sure to stitch something that doesn't break apart!" Ryuko provokes. Annoyed by that sentence, Nui attacks again, hitting Ryuko with the blade on the left shoulder. Blood spreads out of Ryuko's shoulder, she bites her teeth together and takes a few steps back.

"Funny today, aren't we?" Nui asks and attacks once more, but Ryuko blocks and takes a few more steps back until she ends up at a small tree which gives her cover from the left side.

"She's way more concentrated, Ryuko! Take a little breath, quickly, we got some cover right now!"

"Listen to your Kamui! He's got a cute voice!" Nui giggles.

"You can hear him!?"

"She can hear me!?" Senketsu says confused. Nui laughs and attacks, Ryuko however counters the attack by pushing the rifle blade into the tree, making Nui defenseless. Ryuko attacks Nui and chops off her left arm, causing Nui to scream in pain.

"AH! YOU LITTLE... !" she screams angry and pulls out the weapon out of the tree again. Nui bites her teeth together. She's certainly angry, no doubt about that. Well, you can't blame her for that. Her severed arm dissolves on the ground, and a huge puddle of blood is left. Her arm slowly regenerates again.

"Come on, Harime!" Ryuko provokes Nui. Nui holds her rifle a tad bit closer to her body, keeping a defensive position now. She still appears calmer than Ryuko even though she is definitely angry.

"I'm not weak." Nui mumbles quietly. Concentrated, Ryuko looks at Nui and vice versa. Ryuko takes a few more steps back and arrives at a little bench. Senketsu looks at the bench just like Ryuko.

"Now, Ryuko!" Senketsu says. Ryuko jumps onto the bench, and the red stripes on Senketsu light up a bit. Her power grows, but she is

not concentrated enough and jumps too high, giving Nui the opportunity to react. Nui aims into the air as Ryuko jumps from the bench to attack Nui with one devastating attack. Then, Nui shoots at Ryuko, hitting her with the bullet. Ryuko flings back, through the fountain, destroying it completely, landing in a wall, which partially breaks apart to the sheer strength of the bullet. Little concrete parts fall onto her.

"Argh, fuck!" Ryuko mumbles painful and tries to stand up, but Nui comes closer and shoots her into the left shoulder of Senketsu. Senketsu can regenerate slowly, but Ryuko for some reason cannot. A huge hole is in her shoulder, blood spreads, and she moans painful. Then, another bullet hits her leg. Smoke arises with every shot of Nui's fiber rifle. Nui comes even closer until she is almost in front of her, in a rather bad mood, aiming onto Ryuko's torso.

"I'm not weak..." Nui mumbles annoyed, shooting at Ryuko again. Blood spreads once more, and Senketsu's torso turns red thanks to the blood.

"They told me I'm as worthless as the humans." Nui says. Ryuko looks up at Nui. Nui shoots Ryuko once more. Ryuko moans even more painful and inhales hardly, trying to stand up.

"But I'm not." Nui mumbles and turns her rifle around, attacking Ryuko with the buttstock. She hits Ryuko in the face. Everything fades to black...

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Masaru waits in the presidential office, watching Ichiro. It looks different now - everything is white here, except of the furniture, which is mostly red. Ichiro sits on the ground, calm and concentrated. To make sure he does not disturb him, Masaru doesn't move and waits

on a chair. He is curious about what Ichiro is doing. Suddenly, Ichiro looks up and opens his eyes.

"Matoi is in the old museum of Ôsaka." Ichiro realizes.

"So your plan seems to work?"

"Perfectly."

"Should I dispatch Samurai units or Couturiers?"

"No. Send a unit of Ashigaru." Ichiro says and stands up, walking to his desk.

"If I may ask... why only one unit?" Masaru asks confused. Ichiro turns his head to Masaru and smiles slightly.

"The most important thing in life is having fun. Always. One unit is enough." Ichiro grins.

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Someone snores. Ryuko wakes up and looks around. She's hanging around - literally, because shortly after she notices that everything is upside down and that she hangs onto the ceiling. She looks up and see's Senketsu who almost hangs with his eye into her face. His eye is huge. Parts of the lower armor are also hanging down. It looks hilarious, and Satsuki, who is in the same room like Ryuko, would laugh if it wouldn't be so serious. Instead, she looks at the ground, calm and thoughtful. Ryuko notices her feet and hands are tied with life fibers, and Satsuki's hands are tied behind the chair she sits on. They can see a Doppelgänger of Nui sleeping on a desk.

"Satsuki!" Ryuko whispers to her sister. Satsuki looks to Ryuko.

"Ah. You're awake." Satsuki answers.

"Got any idea where we are?"

"An old museum, I suppose."

"I can't believe this bitch is... grrr..."

"I know, Ryuko. And apparently, Senketsu is here too. That is... surprising." Satsuki says, although she is probably rather negatively surprised, but Ryuko didn't really noticed that.

"So how did you end up here?" Ryuko asks.

"Harime's clones attacked me. They won a little skirmish against those Ashigaru-gunners and continued to shoot down my cover. What was surprising because I wouldn't expect Harime to fight against her own men, if they are her men at all. That led me onto an idea and that's why I simply surrendered."

"FOR REAL?"

"Don't worry, Ryuko. I have a plan."

"You better have a damn good one then." Ryuko answers. The clone suddenly moves and falls from the desk, landing on it's face. Nui's clone wakes up and looks at Ryuko and Satsuki, smiling and blushing a little bit.

"Ooooooh, you two are up and don't seem to happy! I'm super sorry for that!" the clone grins. Neither Ryuko nor Satsuki answer.

"I'm going to let my mistress know you are awake! Please don't go away, otherwise Miss Harime is getting very angry." the clone continues to say.

"Oh no, how terrible!" Ryuko answers annoyed. The clone leaves the room.

"Fuck, we could have beaten Nui!" Ryuko says.

"Ryuko, she can't kill the two of us. Her weapon can only knock us out as it seems." Senketsu thinks.

"But she can kill Satsuki."

"I know, Ryuko. We'll find a way out of here. You see the ceiling? It looks instable, maybe we could fall down if you move around back and forth?" Senketsu suggests. Ryuko hesitates at first.

"Well I guess it's worth a try but it's gonna make some serious noises."

"Sure, but I'm getting dizzy." Senketsu chuckles.

"Yeah fair enough." Ryuko answers and starts swinging around. The ceiling truly seems to be instable and has a few cracks already, but that's because the museum really is old already. It's here for a few hundred years already and could use a renovation. That's obvious if you take a look around - the interior of the room what appears to be some kind of office is old. Satsuki eavesdrop at the wall behind her. Seems like the clone is talking to Nui right now. Then, steps are audible.

"Our friend is coming." Satsuki says calm.

"Fuck, alright!" Ryuko mumbles and swings more and more. Something's cracking, apparently the ceiling is about to give up.

"It works!" Senketsu says. The door opens and Nui appears with two of her clones, both of them armed with REVOCS standard fiber rifles. At the same moment, a small part of the ceiling breaks apart and Ryuko falls down to the ground, exactly in front of Nui's shoes. Nui looks at Ryuko down, and Ryuko looks up to her.

"Well that's a view I like to see." Nui mentions and smiles.

"... shut up." Ryuko says and stands up. Satsuki looks at both of them. Ryuko looks directly into Nui's face and vice versa. She smiles, but it's more of an evil smile, less happy than five years ago, before she lost her arms to Ryuko. Other than that, she truly looks like the old one, except for the left eye being regenerated with a scar and without the long pigtails.

"Haven't seen you around in a long time. I missed you sooooo much!"

"I bet you did."

"It was really boring, you know? But now I am back and I'm having more fun than ever!"

"Great for you. How about we both take our weapons and take a nice walk outside, then you could share your fun with me?" Ryuko suggests annoyed. Nui does not answer the question, instead, she plays with Ryuko's red streak in front of her face.

"You really look cute, you know?"

"Don't... touch me." Ryuko threatens and pushes Nui's hand away. Nui holds her arms behind her back. She's not worried at all as both of her clones watch Ryuko. If Ryuko does something stupid, they can simply shoot her and knock her unconscious.

"Sooo... where are those cool scissor blades your dear dead daddy made for you? Did you destroy Shinra Koketsu with them?"

"Maybe. They're gone."

"How unfortunate. That means you cannot kill me! And I can't kill you either! What should we do now?" Nui asks smiling.

"I don't know. Maybe we should search them?" Ryuko asks sarcastic.

"I'd love to!" Nui answers. Ryuko's face expressions slowly changes from angry into serious slowly.

"For real though... how the fuck are you alive? I saw how you decapitated yourself! How is that possible?" Ryuko asks confused and annoyed. Nui sighs and walks to Satsuki, playing with her hair too.

"Mhm, I got revived, you know? Felt pretty naked but now it's not too bad being alive! Although... I wasn't really completely dead, haha." she chuckles. Satsuki's hair feels great and soft.

"Wow, Satsuki. Your hair really feels nice."

"So now there are two Harimes. As if one wouldn't have been enough already." Ryuko says angry and looks at her Katana and then to the clones. The clones smile at her, one of them even waves it's hands towards Ryuko. The other one shows her tongue.

"Yup, yup! Ichiro is a funny little guy, super handsome, has a good fashion style but also pretty unfriendly, I don't like him, so I'll just kill him." Nui answers happily. Satsuki looks up interested.

"You want to kill him?" Satsuki asks confused. Ryuko raises her eyebrows and leans onto a wall. Her Katana lies there.

"Of course! Do you have any idea how annoying this guy is? He really is a party killer if you know what I mean!" Nui smiles.

"You... want to kill him because he's actually not funny? Didn't you just say he is? Wait, what are... ah you know, fuck it." Ryuko says.

"Sorry, my dears. I suppose the words I use are either too smart or too confusing! So, to make it short: I want to kill him because he wasn't very kind to me."

"The fuck is wrong with you, dude?" Ryuko asks.

"I'm A-okay! Really! I had a great childhood full of fun, I was raised perfectly fine by our beloved mama Ragyo and I had the best friends I could have ever imagined: me, myself and I! And now I got YOU and SATSUKI here!" Nui answers satisfied.

"Care to listen to what I want to say, Nui?" Satsuki asks. Nui rolls her eyes and walks in front of Satsuki so that they can look into each others face. Then, Nui stoops forward, holding one leg up so that Ryuko cannot look under her dress. Not that Ryuko would do that anyway.

"We both agree on Ichiro being a pretty annoying person, yes?" Satsuki asks. Nui nods.

"We also agree that he should deserve a few punches in the face?" Satsuki continues. Nui nods again and smiles more.

"Good." Satsuki answers. Ryuko notices what Satsuki seems to have in mind.

"Oh no, Satsuki, we won't, we're not going to work with this psychopath!"

"You see, Nui. Ryuko and I, we have a huge problem with you, I don't think I have to explain why." Satsuki says. Nui chuckles slightly and nods.

"Your Daddy complexes are still a huge thing, hmmm? Well I'm not too resentful but destroying Shinra Koketsu wasn't the most fun move you could have perform."

"Then I suppose we are even? You took our dad, we took your masterpiece?" Satsuki asks. Nui laughs and rolls her eyes.

"Ohhh, Satsuki."

"Before you laugh, hear me out. You want to kill Ichiro, I want to kill Ichiro and Ryuko wants to kill Ichiro. You and Ryuko want to fight but

you cannot do that as long as Neo-REVOCS is actively trying to take our "fun" away. That's why I'm asking you if you would agree to a truce as long as our friend Ichiro is alive. After that, we can gladly have a battle, but for now I think it's more important to work together. I doubt that you can win against him alone. And you seem really eager to defeat him. You could also simply just go ahead and kill me but if you do that you'll be hunted down not just by Neo-REVOCS, but also by Ryuko and Nudist Beach." Satsuki proposes.

"ARE YOU FUCKING SERIOUS!? Hey, Nui! Nui! Listen to me! Get your weapon, I'll take my Katana, we can fight each other, you can hit me first if you want but I won't work with you together, I..." Ryuko gripes.

"Hahaha! This sounds stupid, Satsuki. But you know, it's that kind of stupidity that I hate and love about humans. Every single one of you never knows when to stop. You know what? Oui, why not? Sometimes you need to take a little risk to have a lot of fun. And you know I love fun." Nui grins. Ryuko's eyes become larger, as well as Senketsu's.

"Really?" Ryuko mumbles aggressive. A clone enters the room.

"Miss Harime! Your funny little human friend Hoomaru just said on that Radio thingy that a few bad guys are coming." the clone explains.

"Hoomaru!?" Satsuki asks.

"Oh yes, that's right. Hoomaru is with me." Nui giggles. Satsuki thinks. Did Hoomaru betray her? Or is Hoomaru trying something out regarding Nui? Maybe she really is only with Nui around because that way she could find out more about her and make sure that she doesn't do anything stupid. She wouldn't betray Satsuki, on the other hand it's not 100% sure if Hoomarus ideals she got taught by Ragyo have vanished.

"Satsuki, seriously, you gotta reconsider this. Is that really your idea? How..." and then they can hear a loud shot.

"What was that?" Ryuko asks.

The wall next to Ryuko explodes. Wood and concrete fly around, smoke arises, stones break. The debris hits everything but Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui and the clones. Satsuki peeks outside. There are a few dozens of Ashigaru-swordsmen and gunners outside, and there seems to be an armored vehicle with a gun on top of it. Nui sighs.

"The party poopers are here." Nui mentions. A clone throws a fiber rifle towards her which she catches. Nui snips with her right hand, which causes the life fibers that tie Ryuko, Senketsu and Satsuki together to dissolve.

"Then take your weapons and let us have some fun." Nui suggests and moves into cover. Shots are fired, hundreds of bullets fly into the building. Satsuki takes cover, next to Ryuko. They both peek out.

"Where the fuck do these guys have all those weapons and why does no one give a shit about it?!" Ryuko asks confused.

"So that's where my money goes." Satsuki realizes and gives Ryuko a Katana. Ashigaru-swordsmen storm their position. Nui begins to shoot around. She deals a headshot on one of the Ashigaru-swordsmen. The power of the bullet decapitates the head. Ryuko and Satsuki realize however that these Ashigaru units seem to be life fibers combined with robotic parts.

"They're life fibers!?" Ryuko wonders.

"WOULD YOU KINDLY STEP OUT AND GREET THEM?" Nui asks loud, but kind. Satsuki nods towards Nui and her clones, then jumps out into the open, charging at the Ashigaru units. Ryuko joins her. Bullets fly around, but they can dodge them, and Satsuki even parries a few of them. They arrive at a group of Ashigaru-swordsmen and attack them, using slash attacks, although it's clear that out of

the two sisters, Ryuko is more chaotic and tends to use rather slow but powerful attacks while Satsuki takes more time to attack to deal damage more precisely and use less slashes in general. Both sisters fight through the group of Ashigaru, but there are more around them, about 60 to be exact. Body parts fly through the air as Ryuko and Satsuki fight through the soldiers who seem to struggle against them. They are probably more dangerous on range than in melee combat. Civilians run away in panic, more Ashigaru-swordsmen attack, but Ryuko and Satsuki can deal with them as well.

Meanwhile, Nui shoots the Ashigaru-gunners on the rooftops which try to shoot her seemingly new allies. One after another, the partially alien and robotic enemies fall from the roofs, breaking apart into many parts, but after the fifth shot, Nui has to reload, which always annoys her a bit. Ryuko gets hit onto her back but Senketsu can deflect the attack as the energy gets pushed back, thus leading to the Ashigaru that hit Ryuko flinging away, flying into two of his friends. The three of them land into a second vehicle of Neo-REVOCS which appears to be some kind of transporter for soldiers. Satsuki notices the three soldiers that landed in the car, and so she attacks two more Ashigaru-swordsmen and pushes them at the car with her weapon. Then, Satsuki looks to Nui.

"Shoot the gas tank, Harime!" Satsuki calls towards Nui.

"I'd love to." Nui whispers to herself smiling and aims at the gas tank of the car, then shooting it. The bullet flies straight into it, penetrates the tank hull and causes it to explode. Briefly after, the transporter itself explodes and the Ashigaru fly up into the air. Satsuki smiles towards Nui, which Nui reacts with a wink. Ryuko reaches the armored vehicle with the gun on it and opens the hatch on the vehicle roof. Inside, there is a guy who grins towards her and waves her head. Ryuko grins back and pulls him out of the car, throwing him out of the combat zone as he does not have a weapon, so there is no need to beat him up. Ryuko climbs into the car and steps on the pedal. The car starts driving forward, running over a few Ashigaru swordsmen. Quickly climbing out of the vehicle, she jumps out and performs a over head slash attack, hitting several Ashigaru

swordsmen that were trying to attack Satsuki now. In the background, the car crashes against the transporter that exploded. They really do consist of life fibers and robotic parts which is interesting for the sisters. Why would Ichiro do that? Probably to ensure absolute loyalty towards Ichiro which wouldn't work as good with humans. Not many Ashigaru swordsmen are left, about six or seven to be exact. Nui jumps out of the building with her clones and starts shooting at the Ashigaru units that are left.

Suddenly, a third party opens fire. Coins fly through the air, Ryuko and Satsuki take cover while one of Nui's clones get hit and falls apart. These are apparently Takaradas students. They shoot the spare Ashigaru units down with their coin rifles - the fire rate is immensely high and it looks hilarious how the Ashigaru gets shot down one by one. They start to malfunction, and one of them even explodes. And as if that wouldn't be enough, Takarada himself appears and shoots with a machine gun like coin weapon. They continue to shoot the Ashigaru and even after they are all beaten, they just shoot some more because its so much fun. Coins are flying around literally everywhere. As soon as Takarada and his men lack of coin ammo, Takarada screams.

"NO ONE STARTS A FIREFIGHT IN MY TOWN, IS THAT CLEAR ENOUGH!?" Takarada screams happily.

Everything is quiet. Coins fall onto the ground, the wind is audible, some smoke rises up and Satsuki can see Takarada dance around like a little child. Ryuko looks at Takarada as well. Civilians come back and start collecting the coins for themselves. Nui and her other clones look at the people and Takarada. They look at each other confused, and Nui smiles confused as well. Takarad walks towards Nui. Ryuko and Satsuki see him walking towards her, while one of the clones grabs the fiber rifle of the clone that died because of the students.

"You can be glad you're allied with Matoi and Kiryuin, otherwise we would have shot you down with the power of cash as well! No one's

shootin around in my city. Whoever does it will pay!" Takarada threatens Nui. Nui smiles at him.

"What kind of clown are you and why haven't I talked with you before, you silly." Nui girns.

"Did you just call me a clown? I'm Kanoe Takarada, Boss of the Naniwa-Kinman high school and local commander in chief of Ôsaka! And you seriously call me a clown?!"

"Well you look like one, so, yeah." Nui answers sassy.

"Aha! And who are you that you can call me a clown!?"

"I'm just me."

"Oh really!?"

"Nui Harime, Grand Couturier of REVOCS. Haha, sorry my dear, but shooting around with coins is one of the most stupid things I have ever seen. You humans really do have a twisted sense of humor!" Nui grins. Takaradas eyes become large.

"WHAT!?"

"Takarada!" Satsuki calls. He turns to Satsuki.

"Go now."

"That's my town, no one commands... me..." he mumbles as he looks into Satsuki's eyes that don't appear exactly friendly.

"It might be a good idea to deal with my own business right now, Satsuki, you are totally right!" Takarada grins and runs away. Nui smiles at Ryuko and Satsuki and plays around with her rifle a bit while her clones just imitate her every move.

"This was lots of fun! We should do that more often!" Nui smiles.

"No doubt about that, Harime. You did well." Satsuki answers.

"Oh a human gives me a compliment, how kind of you, dear Satsuki."

"Satsuki, we gotta talk." Ryuko says to Satsuki annoyed.

"Oh come on, Ryuko, I haven't done anything to you in this life. At least not yet! You happen to have a second daddy, or maybe a mother? We could visit them if you want!" Nui grins. Ryuko ignores her stupid sentences

"Stop it, both of you. We can talk now, Ryuko. And you, Harime: I want to talk with Hoomaru later on. We'll meet up in our base later on to talk about how we will continue now. Don't think now that we trust you, we do not. I just want to make sure your clones and my men don't clash each other in combat while we hunt down this maniac Ichiro is." Satsuki explains. Nui nods and continues to play around with her rifle, performing little tricks with it. She seems to enjoy using it. Satsuki and Ryuko take a few steps back and talk to each other.

"So that's your plan?!" Ryuko asks annoyed.

"Yes, Ryuko. What else should I do. She wouldn't have let us go, and sadly, Harime isn't stupid."

"I swear I'll kill her for what she did."

"Do it, but do it once Ichiro is dead. This man is dangerous, far more dangerous than everyone else we met so far. If he can crush your arm without a weapon that severs life fibers, if he can take over entire companies in less than 48 hours and seemingly even control certain government organs to allow him to actually use a private army in the middle of a city, I don't even want to imagine what else he can do. I don't have any idea how he did all of this, still." Satsuki explains. Ryuko looks at Satsuki in disbelief for a moment.

"Great, Satsuki. Really."

"Please trust me, Ryuko. I know what I'm doing. I don't like Nui either, I hate her as much as you do. She killed father, and that is something we cannot forgive. However, she seems to hate this Ichiro and she did pay for her sins by dying."

"Well she didn't pay enough yet then!"

"Trust me. That's all I want, sis." Satsuki pleads. Ryuko sighs annoyed and hesitates a few seconds.

"... if she does one stupid move or hurts you..."

"... then you will kill her. That's okay. Now come, Ryuko. We should let Mikisugi and the others know about our new... "friend." I suggest Iori takes a look at Senketsu as well. I might sound evil now but I don't trust a Kamui where all I know is that it has died once. I just want to make sure it's alright." Satsuki mentions. Ryuko and Senketsu look at each other. She still wears the Senketsu Azami form.

"We can trust Senketsu."

"I know. But I don't know where he's from."

"Who cares? All that matters is that he's back."

"I don't know, Ryuko. I might be too protective but... please let Iori take a look at him."

"It's okay, Ryuko. Honestly, I'm glad too if I know where I come from and what is going on. Maybe Satsuki's friend can find something out." Senketsu asks calm. Ryuko is unsure whether she should allow it, then again, Senketsu has his own mind, and so she nods.

"Alright. If you want it, then it's okay for me too, I suppose." Ryuko smiles.

Eventually, Ryuko and Satsuki meet up with Nui and talk to her. They agree to visit the Nudist Beach headquarter together, however only if

Nui hands out her rifle and leaves her clones inactive during her visit to make sure she doesn't do anything stupid. Since their base isn't hidden anyway, it doesn't really matter if Nui finds out about it or not. Satsuki seems to have a plan about Nui and she is sure about it, which is what counts the most. Ryuko knows that Satsuki doesn't do stupid mistakes normally, and if she does, she is well capable of learning. Still, having Nui as an ally is a thought Ryuko dislikes not just a bit.

On a more positive note, with Senketsu, she got a friend back she would have never thought to see again. He was always a nice memory. A friend that always watched her in the sun whenever she looked it up. The three of them will see how this alliance will develop, now that they are seemingly allied, at least as long as Ichiro is alive. What still bothers both sisters is that Nui apparently really has a problem with the life fibers, which is why Satsuki wants to talk with Hoomaru as soon as she can. After all it's a huge deal to turn against the ones you gave your life for and even sacrificed it. Ryuko however doesn't care about Nui right now, or about a thread in the world in general. All she wants to do once they are back is spending some time with Senketsu.

And that is something that gives her a warm smile for the time being.

A Stitch, Connecting Two Species

Later that day...

Masaru enters the presidential office of Ragyo Kiryuin, or better, Ichiro Harime. Ichiro sits in front of his desk. He seems to work on a few new clothes, but they don't seem to be anything too special, probably just something to kill some time.

"Master Ichiro. The Ashigaru-units were..."

"... eliminated by the three of them, I know, I saw it." Ichiro answers and looks up to Masaru, with a brief smile.

"I see. I suppose I'll leave you alone then." Masaru suggests.

"No. Stay here." he orders. Masaru looks up and to Ichiro.

"Those Ashigaru and Samurai, as you call them, seem to be useful even though they are primitive. You should work on them. They are loyal and obey every word... exactly how it's supposed to be. However, I would prefer a few more humans instead of those... robotic toys."

"Thank you. I'll see what I can do."

"Good. However, there is a second thing we need to talk about, my dear little friend. I need you COVERS clowns for that."

"Whatever you wish. I just want this world to be a better place." Masaru says innocent, not knowing what Ichiro actually has planned. Ichiro chuckles slightly and smiles.

"... heh, I'm certain of that. How about you tell me where the headquarters are located?"

"For what, if I may ask?"

"We need to show the humans that Neo-REVOCS is different. Better than our predecessor. Your friends sadly have to... disappear. It's for a better future for humanity, so to speak."

"You want to kill them!?" Masaru asks shocked. Ichiro laughs.

"No, no, no, no... I don't want to kill them. Don't worry about it. Let me handle everything. Your people will leave the situation in a better shape than ever before." he smiles mischievous.

"I see. You... you know that I trust you, right?" Masaru asks worried.

"Of course I do. I want a list of every major base. And one more thing: prepare the Auditorium for a speech, we will have a lot of visitors tomorrow." he orders.

"I will." Masaru answers and leaves the room. The door closes. Then, Ichiro sits down in the middle of the room, closing his eyes slowly.

"Let's see..." Ichiro mumbles curious.

"Let me ask you one question, Satsuki. Just one." Tsumugu says annoyed. Satsuki stands in the great main hall of Nudist Beach, while Ryuko watches Nui, holding her rifle. Nui seems to be tame for the moment, the only thing she does is playing around with a clone and petting it's hair a bit.

"What did we do to you to actually consider... inviting this freak... to our base?" Tsumugu asks evil. Satsuki stays ice cold.

"I don't know either, dude! I didn't liked the idea either!" Ryuko says. Nui chuckles.

"Shut it." she reacts to Nui.

"Nope." Nui grins back and continues chuckling. Ryuko shakes her head.

"I know it's a controversial idea to say the last. I did this to ensure her support against our enemy for the time being. You cannot deny that she is a capable combatant and a master when it comes to tailoring clothes. Lastly, Mikisugi and you said we need life fibers to craft better weapons and armor."

"But then we could have just raided a convoy! Or a factory!"

"You mean the twelve convoys we attacked this morning that hadn't had anything, not even one crate of life fibers?" Satsuki counters sarcastic.

"It doesn't change the fact we could have attacked a factory!"

"And thus probably losing more than winning. Harime can produce life fibers by default. Slow, but it works. Correct, Harime?" Satsuki asks and raises an eyebrow, turning her head to the former Grand Couturier. Nui nods smiling.

"Oui, I could, but why should I? It's more fun to see you goofin around while I keep my sweet fibers!"

"Don't forget, Harime. You can't win alone." Satsuki answers cold. Nui rolls her eyes.

"Eh, I doubt that but if you ask kindly, I might share a few." she smiles and looks at Tsumugu. Tsumugu looks back with an evil face expression.

"Heeeeyy, big guy, what's your name and why do you look like someone punched your nose, you got into a fight and lost?" Nui laughs. Tsumugu starts cooking up annoyed, and his face turns red.

"Careful, Life Fiber." he threatens.

"Ooooooh, careful, Life fiber, I'm one of the tough boys!" Nui continues to laugh. Tsumugu walks towards Nui and wants to push her away,

but Satsuki intervenes. However, Nui's clone falls from her arm, lands on the ground and grows up, running away with a curious face.

"Ah, god damn it." Ryuko mumbles.

"Ryuko? Tsumugu, Mikisugi and I have to talk about the entire situation. Please bring Nui away, maybe take her to a cell or somewhere else where it is safe enough. She has to sleep somewhere." Satsuki suggests and suddenly starts walking with Tsumugu.

"For real now?!" Ryuko asks annoyed. Nui turns to Ryuko happily, while Nui's clone still walks around happily.

"Alrigh, mon cher! What fun things are we going to do today?! Should we tease a few boys? You like boys? I like boys and girls, you know?" Nui grins. Ryuko closes her eyes briefly, inhales and exhales through the nose and then comes up with an idea.

"I got a great idea, Nui. Come on, I'll show you what I mean!" Ryuko says, pretending to smile, then taking Nui's hand which she accepts as Ryuko is partially life fiber. If it would be a human, she probably would have cut their arm off now.

"Tell your clone to follow you." Ryuko orders.

"Can't do that! But don't worry, she'll come back." Nui answers smiling.

"Eh, fuck it." Ryuko mentions and continues walking. It's pretty obvious Ryuko is annoyed, towards Satsuki and Nui, but it doesn't help, and sadly, Satsuki is somewhere right when she says that they could use every help. And since Nui seems to know Ichiro, it could be useful indeed to have her around, even though they need to find a way to keep her chaotic nature low... or at least low enough so that she doesn't start killing someone. Anyway, Ryuko pretends to be excited about having Nui around her. That's pretty funny to Nui as

she knows that Ryuko just pretends it. Senketsu also pretends to be happy.

"So, Nui, old pal!" Senketsu says. Ryuko notices how ashamed Senketsu is of saying that.

"We are pals?" Nui asks grinning.

"We are now! What happened to you hair?" he asks curious.

"Oh you know, the usual snip snip, haha!" Nui answers...

Meanwhile, Satsuki, Tsumugu and Mikisugi stand in the command center. Houka listens to what the three are talking about. Nonon enters the room and joins Houka.

"Alright, Satsuki... tell me exactly why you think it was a good idea to get Nui Harime over here, please. She is the exact opposite of us, she is what we are trying to destroy. We might be a perverted organization but we have a reason to be like this - as long as monsters like her exist, we need to exist as well. So, what made you come to the conclusion to actually invite a fashion freak like her?" Mikisugi asks confused. Satsuki sips from her tea. The tea tastes bad, however, Satsuki keeps a calm attitude. Nonon and Houka are interested to hear Satsuki's reaction.

"I already briefly told it Tsumugu, but to be clear enough, let me explain it with every detail. Now this is what made me think: we are dealing with someone who seemingly is more powerful than my "mother" Ragyo could have ever been. While she "only" led a fashion, she had to keep her head down for the time before the COVERS appeared. This man, Ichiro Harime, however, who seemingly has to do something with Nui Harime, does not have to play by the rules of our world, or at the very least, of Japan. A man like him with a power like that should have gotten into immense trouble by now, but he did not, and I don't like that. He gained a private army in less than a week. Something Ragyo didn't had at first.

Secondly: We do not have any life fibers around here. Even if our Arsenal is well filled, we need to be careful and effective since Neo-REVOCS has more units than we do. Harime can produce life fibers and knows best where the most valuable Neo-REVOCS factories are located, simply because she visited all of them, unlike me. She knows everything about this corporation - and she knows more about our opponent than we do, which can be very valuable as it can give us an idea about how to fight him. We don't know yet why she fights against him though.

And lastly: even if Harime is a despicable person, she is one of the best fighters we could possibly get. And we can always use good fighters." Satsuki explains calm. It's quiet for a brief moment, but then, Mikisugi gives an answer.

"All of this might be right, Satsuki, however, she still is the complete opposite of us. If one of us gets shot, she won't help. If the moral of our troops are high, she'll destroy that moral. And if someone needs help for general stuff, let's say transporting goods, she'll just stand around. She is life fibers. And we've sworn to ban life fibers from this world. That doesn't count just for her, but also, as evil as it might sound like, for Senketsu as well. He is just as much life fiber as she is, even if he isn't hostile but a friend. His and Harime's comeback can't be a coincidence."

"I agree that Senketsu's revival is something we need to investigate as from what we know, he burned up completely and died. I think this is a trap. I might be wrong, but I need to tell my sister she has to let Iori investigate Senketsu. I don't want her to be harmed. Regarding Harime: All of this is true. That's why we only have a truce. Once Ichiro is eliminated, we will deal with her." Satsuki explains. Tsumugu shakes his head.

"I'll be totally honest. We should kill Harime. We can interrupt her regeneration with the Anti-Life fiber bullets we have at the moment. We lock her away, retrieve the scissor blades and Ryuko can kill her and avenge Isshin after several years. It's obvious that Ryuko is annoyed by Harime and that she wants to kill her for what she did.

You talk about Harime being an ally, but did you already thought about the idea that Harime might just play around and is in truth allied with that Ichiro guy? She could spy on us." Tsumugu answers.

"Which is why we take precautions to make sure Harime will be incapacitated and killed if she makes a mistake. Whenever Ryuko and I are about to start a operation, we'll take her with us. We can handle her. That's why I suggest that only the three of us travel to Tokyo to retrieve the scissor blades. That way, Harime stays away from the base and once we got the weapons, we can eliminate her if she makes something stupid." Satsuki explains. Annoyed, Nonon stands up and sides with Satsuki, while Houka constantly looks to Mikisugi and Satsuki.

"Alright, seriously. Satsuki and I are childhood friends, I know her for a long time. Satsuki is always a calm but resolute person and knows exactly where to draw the line. You can trust Satsuki. Did she ever disappointed one of you? I can't remember to be honest. Houka, Ira and the green monkey would say the same. I'm not saying that just as a friend, but also as an ally for you. Trust Satsuki, she ain't stupid." Nonon supports her best friend and looks into Mikisugi's eyes with a burning eagerness. Both Mikisugi and Tsumugu start thinking. They are not completely sure what to think about this. They quietly talk with each other while Nonon closes her eyes. Every lieutenant in the room watches them talk. Satsuki waits. Then, Mikisugi turns around.

"We trust you Satsuki, you know that. Getting Nui over here is a dangerous idea which Tsumugu and I dislike. However, if you manage to develop a reasonable plan on how to make sure she'll 100% won't harm anyone, she can stay for the time being as long as it's necessary." Mikisugi proposes. Satsuki nods grateful.

"Thanks." she answers cool.

"Now, where is Harime anyway? Is she with Ryuko?" Mikisugi asks.

"So, you guys got a stitching hall over here? Isn't it cold for you during the winter, I mean, you're walking around naked. You can get a cold pretty quick if you walk around outside while being naked! That's why I love making clothes, y'know?" Nui grins. Ryuko tries to ignore what she says.

"Look, Nui." Ryuko says.

Nui looks at Ryuko, smiling and see's how she opens a door. She got the key for the room at the entrance room of the command center. Nui watches curiously Ryuko open the door and peeks into the room. Looks quite okay to her which surprises her, even if it's nothing compared to her beautiful room in REVOCS.

"Oooooohhh... that looks very old fashioned!" Nui says happily and looks around in the room.

"Yeah, I know, it's great, right?" Ryuko grins. Senketsu chuckles quiet. Nui nods with a fat smile in her face and touches the Duvet of her bed. Feels comfortable. Pretty okay to her.

"That bed feels soft!" she laughs and looks at Ryuko with an innocent face.

"Mhm, yup! Wanna play a game, Harime?" Ryuko asks curious.

"I love games! What kind of game?!" she asks happily and walks towards Ryuko. Nui seems to know though what Ryuko is planning, she sadly isn't stupid. But she goes with it.

"Ah, you know, I was thinking of a game but you'll probably win anyway and you know, that would be kinda boring, so uh..." Ryuko explains all of a sudden. Truth is, Ryuko wants to lock up Nui in here. Nui pouts.

"Nwaaa, that's too bad! I could give you a little advantage if you want! You're gonna lose anyway but I want you to think you have a chance against me!" Nui chuckles.

"No way, really, you'd do that for me? Wow, I didn't thought you'd be so kind. I guess I never really gave you a proper chance, seems like you are a cool friend actually!" Ryuko grins. Nui nods.

"Yes, I am! In fact, you can't find anyone cooler than me!" she answers. Ryuko, Senketsu and Nui start laughing, and Nui sits on her bed, looking at Ryuko.

"Now, Ryuko!" Senketsu says. Suddenly, Ryuko walks a few steps back and closes the door while Nui just smiles. They quickly close the door and lock it up. Since the door is made out of steel and alloys, Nui won't get through it, not even by force, as while her arms can be transformed into blades, they cannot pierce steel. Ryuko grins and nods satisfied.

"Well that was easy." Senketsu mentions. They can hear Nui standing up.

"Ryuko, that's so mean of you! Ryuko! I'm going to starve now! How am I supposed to stay alive if I can't eat something because you locked the door?!" Nui asks chuckling. Ryuko and Senketsu don't say anything, but they do chuckle.

"Ryuuuuko!" Nui sings and knocks against the door.

"Nwaaa, you are mean! I like mean! Let me out!" Nui asks kindly. Ryuko sneaks away, visiting the command center where Satsuki drinks her bad tea. She sits at a huge table made out of metal which is next to the planning table. She looks at Ryuko and has to smile slightly as she see's Ryukos big smile.

"Ey what's up, Satsuki." Ryuko grins.

"You seem to be amused, what happened?" Satsuki asks curious, sipping her tea. After that, she's grossed out. That tea really is horrible but there seems to be nothing better here.

"God, that's awful." she mumbles.

"I've taken care of Nui."

"What did you do?" Satsuki asks.

"Locked her up in a room in our dorms. Man, if you would have heard her." Ryuko laughs. Satsuki chuckles.

"Not bad." she answers. Ryuko sits down at the table.

"It's been some time, Senketsu..." Satsuki says.

"I agree. You've cut your hair, I see. Looking good." Senketsu answers. Ryuko plays around with a pen while both of them are talking.

"Not entirely voluntarily to be honest, but I kept it nonetheless. I think it's a good symbol for my new "Me." Honnouji is gone, well, more or less, there were storms every once in a while the last years and a few parts of it became visible again... but anyway, how are you?"

"I'm doing good. What do you think of me? Ryuko said you like suits and all kinds of noble clothes. Kinda preferred my old uniform but I would lie if I say I wouldn't enjoy this new version of myself, hehe."

"I like it. I would have preferred white colors, but you do fit Ryuko." she answers and smiles. Ryuko blushes a bit.

"Not at all!"

"He does."

"Nope!"

"Yes he does!"

"In your dreams!" Ryuko laughs. Senketsu and Satsuki chuckle.

"I missed both of you." Senketsu mentions. Ryuko smiles and fills a little cup of tea, then she sips from it. She's grossed out as well,

Satsuki grins mischievous.

"The fuck, who made this tea!?" Ryuko asks curious.

"Tsumugu!" Mikisugi says in the background...

Gamagoori and Sanageyama in the meantime are exercising in the gym. Around them, other men and women of Nudist Beach are exercising as well. Sanageyama practices a few new attacks on Gamagoori with a bamboo sword. Gamagoori sustains the pain easily, as expected.

"I think I got it now. You ready, tough guy?" Sanageyama asks. Gamagoori nods.

"Always." the giant man answers and stands ready, like a shield, curious about Sanageyama's attack. Sanageyama starts by attacking multiple times from the left and right side, then continues to jump up and perform an over head attack, hitting Gamagoori's head. Gamagoori simply stands as if nothing happened. In general, he seems to be fairly unimpressed, Sanageyama however nods rather satisfied, as he knows that Gamagoori doesn't mind the pain.

"What do you think?" Sanageyama asks.

"More power from the left side. The jump attack is good. But the rest needs improvements." the big man answers. Sanageyama nods.

"You know, in Ôsaka we had a Dojo with lots of newcomers every month. Was pretty neat testing out new attacks on them. The place is awesome in general, not gonna lie, and they have a good sense of humor too." he reacts. Just as Sanageyama wants to perform a second attack, Gamagoori's eyes enlarge, and he jumps up scared and hurtled.

"AHHH!" he screams and runs a few steps forward. Sanageyama makes huge eyes and watches how Gamagoori runs away until he's at the entrance of the gym. He looks at him confused.

"What's wrong with you, dude?" Sanageyama asks and grins.

"Something pricked me from behind!" he answers. Sanageyama looks to his left where Gamagoori stood and see's Nui. Well, her clone, to be exact. The clone watches both of them with an innocent look, but a little smile. A few of the other Nudist Beach soldiers look at the three of them. Sanageyama raises his eye brows.

"Well here's our troublemaker." he mentions and walks to the Doppelgänger.

"Clones like you aren't allowed to walk around in the base, you know that." the man says. The clone just looks at Sanageyama. It doesn't blink or does anything else, it just stands there and smiles a bit.

"Aight then." Sanageyama says and walks in front of the clone, blinking once and then looking into the clones eye.

Both Sanageyama and the clone start an intensive eye watching contest. Gamagoori walks to both contestants and watches them, switching between his friend and the clone. With an ice cold but cool look, Sanageyama watches the clone, while the clone just stands there, harmless and with a kind face expression. Whoever blinks first, loses. After a while, more and more Nudist Beach soldiers join the group and watch the two of them looking into each other. People start whispering in the background and wonder who has to blink first. Gamagoori blinks the entire time, every time he looks at the other one.

"Tough one, huh?" Sanageyama asks the clone. The clone just stands there. Slowly but steady, Sanageyama's eyes start to burn a bit, but he stays staunchly.

"How is that possible? The clone had to blink already!" Gamagoori comments confused and looks at the clone with big eyes. The clone smiles a bit more, seemingly finding it funny that Sanageyama puts so much effort into it. Sanageyama pinches his eyes a bit, but he does not give up.

"Gotta blink?" Sanageyama asks. The clone shakes it's head.

"Come on, Sanageyama!" someone says.

"You can do this!"

But eventually, Sanageyama has to blink and loses. Still, people applaud him for enduring this so long. After that, they continue to do their own stuff again.

"Fuck, you're not bad." Sanageyama reacts. The clone smiles and then blinks.

"Thank you! You are funny!" the clone says amused.

"I'm not."

"I think you are! What cool things are you guys doing?!"

"Exercising." Gamagoori mentions.

"Wow, that is awesome! Can I exercise too?!" the clone asks curious and happily.

"Uhm... shouldn't you go back to your... mother, or creator, or whatever you call her?"

"Yes I should, but I am in trouble already so I might as well just hang around with you guys if you don't mind! Why is your hair green? Did you fell into a bucket of green color?" the clone asks curious. Sanageyama grins.

"What'cha thinking, Ira?"

"No clone is allowed to walk in this base. Lady Satsuki told us that!" Gamagoori answers cold.

"Come on, she seems to be alright."

"No!" he reacts. The clone pouts and looks at Gamagoori, pretending to be sad.

"Fun brake!" the clone answers. Gamagoori looks down to the clone.

"You know, lil clone, Gamagoori sometimes is a mean man, but he's right, you can't walk around here. How about this: we both go back to your creator. If Satsuki allows it later on, you can ask your creator if she can let you visit me, I could use a second person for some new combos. You down for that?" Sanageyama suggests. The clone jumps up happily.

"OH! YES! I'd love to! Are we going to kill someone?!" the clone asks curious.

"Uh, no, but you know, sometimes punching someone can be fun too. I think."

"Yeah, that's true!" the clone laughs.

"Alright, Ira, I'll bring back the clone real quick and then I'll come back." Sanageyama says. Gamagoori nods and sits onto a bench, taking a short break and drinking some water while the other two walk away...

At the same time, Ryuko and Senketsu visit Iori in the Research & Development facility of the base. Ryuko looks around. About a dozen of Nudist Beach soldiers work here, wearing researcher coats that make it easy to recognize them as such. Blueprint of weapons and armor, ammo, parts for enhanced DTRs and other stuff lay around, all on desks and tables made out of metal. Other than that there are also small little rooms to experiment with prototypes and there is even a little work bench for chemical experiments. Both friends see Iori working on a uniform in a light red. Maybe it's for Nonon? Iori watches Ryuko coming closer to him.

"Sup, Iori, you mind if I disturb you real quick? I could use your help." Ryuko mentions. Iori looks at Senketsu, then on Ryuko again.

"Your Kamui?"

"Mhm. Satsuki and Senketsu wanna know what he is made of and if he's alright. Not that it's a trap or anything." Ryuko answers. Iori puts away Nonon's armor and prepares some space on his desk.

"I can do that. Take it off." Iori says. Following up, Ryuko takes off Senketsu, still wearing a bra. It has the same colors like years ago, a blue one with white stripes. It still is a bit uncomfortable for her but then again, at Nudist Beach, everyone is naked, which means that no one really cares. Then, Ryuko sits down onto a chair and watches Iori work.

"Ah, I felt that!" Senketsu says as Iori carefully cuts him with a scissor to get access to certain life fibers.

"You won't hurt him, alright?"

"I can't promise that. But I'll do my best. Your Kamui is in good hands, I know what I am doing." Iori comforts her. Ryuko nods.

"So... you are here for a while already. Is it possible to ask for some goodies that could be delivered into the sleeping room?" Ryuko asks. Iori thinks briefly while working on Senketsu.

"Depends. What do you need?"

"A TV would be neat."

"We have TVs. I can tell a worker he should send one into your room."

"Cooleo." she answers and leans back. She still kinda thinks it's funny to know that Nui is locked in her room, and so she laughs again. Senketsu chuckles since he knows exactly why she's laughing. Iori looks at Ryuko with a confused face.

"What's wrong?" Iori asks.

"You heard about our new guest, right?"

"Harime?"

"Yeah. We locked her up in her own room, she didn't liked that."
Ryuko laughs.

"Hehe. I'm waiting for the moment where she finds out who's responsible for the uniforms here."

"Prepare yourself to hear some dumb jokes."

"I know. I'm excited for it." he answers. Iori carefully draws out one of the fibers and investigates them. A few orange rays flow through them. He's fascinated by the look of it.

"Been some time since I worked on fresh life fibers, but this is interesting indeed. Your Kamui can talk with everyone. See the orange rays?" he asks and shows them Ryuko. Senketsu looks at the fiber Iori holds.

"Huh, that's how I look like from the inside?" Ryuko's friend mentions.

"If they wouldn't be there, he couldn't talk with anyone except you." he explains and stitches the fiber together again.

"He's pretty new apparently. There's no doubt about it that your Kamui was made by a master of his profession. Could be made by this Harime that owns Neo-REVOCS. Seems like Senketsu is not 100% done, I see a few missing fiber structures here and there. I do think however with some time it can develop and become very powerful. More powerful than before, although I don't think as powerful as his Kisaragi form, or Shinra Koketsu. You certainly stole something very valuable from them." Iori comments.

"Neat." she smiles. Iori nods and lets off from Senketsu. Then, he gives Senketsu back to Ryuko. She puts him on again.

"It's remarkable how happy you are. You really missed him, did you?"

"Yeah. I'm just glad he's here. I still don't get why I lost the fight against Nui though..."

"I assume you weren't used to him. With some time and practicing, I'm sure you can get stronger again. Your Kamui has a lot of hidden potential. I'm excited to see what it can do." Iori says.

"Sounds good. Thanks, Iori." she smiles.

"No problem, Ryuko. I'll make sure you get a TV in a few minutes." Iori promises. Ryuko nods grateful and walks away, while Iori continues working on the armor for Nonon.

Meanwhile, Sanageyama and the clone visit the command center where Tsumugu and Mikisugi are, while Satsuki and Houka have some small talk.

"Yo, I got one of Harime's clones, does anyone have an idea where this crazy maniac is hanging around?" Sanageyama asks.

"In your dorms. Next to Ryuko's room." Mikisugi answers. Sanageyama nods and continues walking to the dorms with the clone. He takes the keys to the room with him. The clone is happy to walk around with Sanageyama.

"You are pretty funny for a human!" the clone chuckles, looking up to Sanageyama.

"Thanks, I suppose. You are weird, but at least you don't rip off my clothes, that makes you more kind than she ever was." he grins. The clone chuckles.

"Miss Harime does that a lot! She thinks it's funny, just like everything else in life!" the clone answers.

"Really, she's laughing about everything?" he asks curious.

"Yup! Literally everything! It sometimes make her go completely crazy and... UH, FORGET ABOUT IT!" the clone grins and blushes. Sanageyama nods confused. They pass by Nonon who just went out of the hall to the dorms.

"Ah, would you look at that, a clone." Nonon grins. The clone smiles.

"Hey! Wow, you are really cute! I bet my mistress would kill you last! She likes cute humans more than other humans, but in the end, they are all stupid!" the clone grins. Nonon grins and nods.

"I mean yeah, if you say so, cutie." Nonon grins and walks away. That seems to be the deeply dark and disturbing humor the clones and Nui herself laugh about every day. Sanageyama and the clone enter the dorms. He looks surprised as he reaches Nui's door.

"A stop sign and wooden planks?!" Sanageyama reacts confused and raises his eye brows. There's a note on the wooden planks.

"Don't open! Ryuko." he reads. Nui walks around in the room and goes to the other side of the door, knocking on it.

"Hey! Helloo-hooo!? Let me out! Please!" Nui says and chuckles.

"Yo, what's up, yarn ball?" Sanageyama asks grinning.

"Hey! Is that you? Aren't you the guy I made naked in front of the entire school?!" Nui asks, as she recognizes the voice.

"Gotta love Ryuko for that one." he mumbles grinning and walks to the clone who waits curiously.

"You don't want your mistress to get into trouble, right?" he asks the clone.

"My mistress never gets into trouble, she IS the trouble! That's how magnificent she is!" the clone answers smiling.

"Fair enough, but she can't go out yet."

"What?! Why!?" the clone asks confused and looks annoyed at Sanageyama.

"Because... because we are baking a cake for her at the moment, I just remembered that! That's why she can't go out and that's why there are these very robust and solid wooden planks you certainly can not rip off!" Sanageyama grins. The clone raises its eye brow and looks surprised.

"Really?! You guys are doing that!? You are so kind!"

"I know. Alright, listen up, I can't bring you to your "mistress" yet BUT I can take care of you once I see her again. How does that sound?" Sanageyama asks. The clone thinks excited and seems to count something with its fingers, even calculating something for whatever reason.

"What are you counting?" Sanageyama asks.

"Oh I'm not counting, I'm just making a few funny gestures so that you think I would think!"

"... makes sense. I think."

"Okay then! But please, please, please bring me back to my mistress as soon as you can!" the clone asks kindly and then shrinks and lifeless. Sanageyama grabs the clone and looks at it. It really looks like a little puppet or plush now. Sanageyama puts the clone onto his belt and hides it behind his jacket.

"Who would've thought I'd have to do this shit?" Sanageyama asks himself loudly and walks away.

"Hey! You still here!?" Nui calls for Sanageyama...

The day passes. While Ryuko, Satsuki, Mikisugi and the rest of the group all eat in an own little canteen next to the command center, a few Nudist Beach soldiers try to give Nui Harime something to eat

without accidentally letting her out, which they can barely manage. Around the late evening, about 9:55 PM, Ryuko and Senketsu go back to her sleeping room. There is a TV now. Ryuko jumps onto the bed and relaxes, looking around, just like Senketsu who is curious about the room. The wall next to the bed could be a nice place for Senketsu to hang on. Ryuko yawns.

"Well, that was a day that happened." Ryuko mentions.

"Yeah."

"I don't know where to start to be honest."

"Me neither. Well... so... how have you been, Ryuko? You really changed" Senketsu asks.

"Mhm... I'm okay I suppose. Got a job at a call center now, well, I probably lost it now but it was okay. And I'm living in dad's old mansion now. Satsuki renovated it from REVOCS money." Ryuko answers.

"That's nice... and how about Mako? You still doing some stuff with her?" he asks. Ryuko hesitates at first.

"... no, I'm not. I just hope Mako is alright. I haven't seen her in a long time. Ira Gamagoori sometimes talks with her, but I haven't seen her for years."

"Why's that?"

"... it's not possible. I'm not allowed to. That's all." she sighs.

"I'm sorry about that, Ryuko."

"Thanks." she answers slightly sad and looks around some more.

"And the others? You seem to be more serious and mature than before."

"Yeah... Satsuki owns REVOCS, well... she owned REVOCS. She wanted to attend school and live a normal life but that wasn't possible. There's something... something I gotta tell you."

"I'm listening."

"About four years ago, some sort of sickness developed. It causes hallucinations and nightmares. The worst cases have to be brought into containment cells because they are a threat to others. A lot of people suffer from it. Satsuki and I too. We call it Life Fiber plague, or life fiber sickness. That's why Satsuki had to leave school and deal with REVOCS. She didn't wanted to lose the company and a possible way to produce a cure if people find a way for it."

"... that doesn't sound good." he says worried.

"Mhm. You have nightmares every night. Most of the time you see your friends or loved ones, you do some stuff with them and suddenly, everything stops. It's kind of like you would relive a memory and at some point, it just stops and turns into a nightmare. There is some kind of illusion that plagues you, it can be everything. Guilt, hate, rage, you name it. Whatever bothers you the most in life. And this illusion consumes you in the last moment of your nightmare before you wake up. And when you do wake up, you always feel uncomfortable." she explains.

"... and this sickness is going on for four years already...?" he asks worried.

"Yeah. Four years. Satsuki and I have it for four years as well. There is almost no day where I can't properly sleep. I sometimes drink some Energy or a coffee to tune myself up again. At least I got used to it and now I don't need as much sleep as back then, but... *sigh*

"And what plagues you?"

"That I was never able to avenge dad. When it started, I thought it would have been just one or two nightmares, you know, nothing to

worry about. But as they came more often and then on a regular base, they felt... real. I can remember the worst nightmare I have had. It was the one that probably made me start hating myself for never being able to kill dad's murderer. It's the first nightmare where people died because of me.

Mako and I, we... we were on a meadow, playing a little snow ball battle during winter. On our way back home we saw how our village burned down. Everyone was panicking, dead or burning. I tried to save Mako's family but I couldn't. Her parents were nothing more than bones and ashes... and I lost Mataro on my way out. I only heard him dying. And when I went back to Mako to tell her what happened..." she explains and inhales, then exhales.

"... Nui Harime appeared and killed her. She ripped her apart as if she would have been nothing. She laughed into my face and tried to kill me, and that's where I woke up. After that, she appeared in my dreams every night. I see her every day so to speak. And whenever we meet each other, she is making fun of me, hurts others and eventually tries to kill me. If you have nightmares like these every night, it... kinda changes you. And yeah... at one point, I guess I kind of lost myself. I hate her. Harime... the nightmares... the guilt I feel... sometimes I see an hallucination of her too. Satsuki probably feels like that too."

"Ryuko..."

"... at one point I just wished I would have someone with me. I wasn't able to take that shit anymore. Satsuki and I, we try to spend as much time as we can but I have to work most of the time. I love her, she's my sister... but... even though she did change her personality, she still mostly is rather serious. I can't blame her for that. She was raised this way. That's why I was wishing every day I could see Mako or you again. You told me you would always watch me from the sun, but... I wanted to hear your voice. And someone I could hug." she says sad.

"... but you are not alone anymore. I am here. I don't know how and why... but I am here now. And Mako surely is somewhere outside there too. We'll find her sometime and when we do, we can have a great time together. You know... I missed you too. When I started to burn up, all I was thinking of was to protect you, and when it was over and everything became black... I saw white fibers. I was able to touch them and when I did, I saw memories. Somehow, it was beautiful and good, but... it also made me miss you." Senketsu explains. Ryuko nods.

"Satsuki, her friends and I am here for you whenever you need us." he says to comfort Ryuko. They can hear Nui and a few clones giggling in the room next to them, they are probably playing some games.

"... yeah and Harime is here too, sadly." he chuckles. Ryuko smiles briefly.

"I'm just glad to have you here."

"Me too." he answers. Someone knocks on the door. Ryuko stands up and opens the door. It's Satsuki.

"Hey, Satsuki." she smiles.

"Hello Ryuko. Senketsu." Satsuki answers and walks into the room. Ryuko puts her hands into the pockets.

"I don't want to disturb both of you. You haven't seen each other in a very long time after all. I was speaking with Mikisugi a few minutes ago. We decided to retrieve the scissor blades tomorrow. 9 AM is when we leave the base. We should be there at 4 PM then and if we are quick, we'll be home at about 1 AM again. I made sure we get a free day then."

"Already? Well... makes sense." Ryuko says.

"Mhm. Now that we have Senketsu... and Harime... we should retrieve the blades as soon as possible. Iori wrote down a few notes after he analyzed Senketsu and came to the conclusion that he might be able to help you to dive down up to the ground as you can synchronize with him well. And Senketsu can look around in the water without a problem if his theory is correct." Satsuki explains.

"Oh... okay."

"I know, Ryuko. That's all serious business and honestly, I don't like it either. But we can't lose time."

"No it's cool, Satsuki. I gotcha." she answers. Satsuki nods.

"Anyway... I don't want to disturb you now. Big sister is coming at a bad time, I guess." Satsuki grins slightly.

"Hehe, it's okay." Senketsu answers.

"Yeah, it's alright." Ryuko answers.

"Okay. In any case, Ryuko, you should take a shower. The fountain and the museum didn't do well to say the least. Relax a bit. I'm glad you are in a good mood, even if we have a second visitor. I never saw you more happy." Satsuki says smiling.

"Heh, thanks for the tip. Yeah... you know... having a friend is just a good feeling. Having Senketsu, I mean." Ryuko says.

"You own me? Am I an object?" Senketsu asks ironically.

"Of course, you're my object!" Ryuko chuckles. Satsuki pats Ryuko's shoulders.

"Good night, Ryuko. I hope you can sleep well tonight. You deserve that." Satsuki smiles genuine. Seeing her little sister so happy because of Senketsu warms up her otherwise rather cold heart.

"Good night, Sis." Ryuko says and hugs her briefly. Satsuki leaves the room. Ryuko hangs Senketsu on the wall and proceeds to take a shower which she leaves after ten minutes. Feeling good and clean, she comes back, puts on a nice red Pyjama and jumps into her bed, turning the TV on. Ryuko and Senketsu watch a bit, do some small talk and laugh about the comedy that is visible on the monitor. Around 11:20 PM, Ryuko nods off and starts sleeping. The TV still runs for a few more minutes until Senketsu decides to jump off the wall. He succeeds after a few attempts and tries to grab the remote control, hitting on the red POWER button. He manages to turn the TV off and jumps around satisfied, then tries to climb up onto his wall again. But since it's extremely difficult to reach the hook, he simply decides to climb onto Ryuko's bed and lays down next to her. Shortly after, Ryuko grabs Senketsu out of instinct and cuddles him slightly, but comfortable. Senketsu is happy about that which is very well visible thanks to his eye, and then he starts sleeping as well.

"Sweet dreams, Matoi..." Ichiro chuckles and stands up. He leaves the office and turns off the lights...

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A bell is ringing. Students leave their class rooms and leave the school. It's afternoon and school is finished for today. Ryuko and Mako leave their class room. They look like ordinary students now, holding some books onto their hands and looking outside. It's a normal japanese school with normal folk around here. Outside, the sun shines, and there is a little forest as well.

"So how was your exam?" Ryuko asks Mako curiously.

"Great! I didn't understood a single word but I think I did really good!" Mako grins. Ryuko chuckles and shakes her head.

"Alright then." she answers. Ryuko and Mako got used to the life here and visit the school for a few months already. It's pretty chill and relaxed out here and of course completely different than the Honnouji-Academy and Ryuko's old school, the so called "Masamune High". It was the place where she grouped up with a gang. Thank god this life is over now, she thinks. Ryuko and Mako leave the school building and enter the yard which looks really nice, with flowers and a few benches to sit on. Tables are also outside, and some students are eating right now.

"Did you knew there is a cinema here, Ryuko-chan?!" Mako asks curious.

"I'm not a big fan of cinemas, to be honest."

"You're not!?"

"Nah. I was in one, once. Ended up having a fight with others, and I was prohibited to visit it. The others as well by the way." Ryuko grins.

"Okay! We'll visit it anyway! I never was in a cinema!" Mako laughs.

"I mean, a cinema is sick, not gonna lie, but you got weirdos everywhere that do their own thing. Some even sleep there. Completely lost if you ask me."

"I want to sleep there too! The seats are comfortable probably." Mako says. Ryuko pinches her eyes.

"If you want to." Ryuko grins. Mako nods. They walk to the next bus stop and sit down on a bench, taking out their lunch boxes. Ryuko takes out an apple, and Mako has a few croquettes. What else, of course.

"So what do you want to watch in the cinema?" Ryuko asks.

"Oh, I don't know. I just want to watch something! All I want is to visit a cinema, Mataro never wants to though."

"Okay... I guess I can make an exception and we can visit one. Been a while anyway and I bet it's cool with a friend or two."

"Yes! Everything is better if you are together! That's why we are friends! Because being alone is boring and sad."

"Being alone is boring and sad... yeah... you got a point." Ryuko mumbles. Mako looks around. It really is a beautiful summer day. There is a little rabbit in the bushes on the other side of the street, watching them eat. Mako has a big smile as she see's the rabbit, and Ryuko has to chuckle. A few birds are chirping.

"Alright, once we are home, I'll visit the internet cafe nearby and take a look at what's running in the cinema, okay?" Ryuko suggests smiling. Mako's eyes enlarge and shine.

"YES!" she says happily and hugs Ryuko. Ryuko giggles. Shortly after, the bus arrives, Ryuko and Mako enter it. They continue to work on thier homework a bit so that they don't have to deal with it at home later on. And then, they relax for a while, looking outside. There is a nice view onto a huge forest and a little hill with a few temples on it, and far in the background, they can see one or two skyscrapers from the nearby city.

So this is the life after the Honnouji-Academy. A normal life as student in an urban, postapocalyptic Japan. It's more quiet than one might expect at first, but it's nice. Nicer than everything else what Ryuko lived through. She doesn't even think about it. All of this is over. The fights in school. The countless battles against Satsuki, the four deva and of course Nui Harime and Ragyo Kiryuin... this is finally over now.

"Did you heard something from your sister again, Ryuko?" Mako asks with a open mouth.

"Mhm. She tried to visit school again but she had to go to REVOCS. Strange enough that she didn't really told me why. She only said that there was some crazy incident with some sickness and the

government itself went to her to talk with her. Since then, she's at REVOCS."

"Oooohh, okay! What is REVOCS again?" Mako asks. Ryuko grins.

"A pretty weird organization that was rendered inactive for a while, they made some really cheap clothes and the person that was responsible for them, nuh uh, weird as fuck, seriously." Ryuko grins.

"Oh. Why does she work there again?" Mako asks. Ryuko laughs.

"Mako, what would I do without you?"

"I don't know. Does that matter?" Mako asks. Ryuko looks out of the window again and looks at the sun. Senketu probably smiles at them right now. That's why Ryuko smiles back. There is also a silhouette on the horizon, and it holds blade and a parasol. Ryuko takes a closer look.

"Ryuko?" Mako asks confused. Suddenly, time slows down and eventually stops, but Ryuko can perfectly move still. The silhouette comes closer, and fast. It's Nui Harime, with her black arms. Ryuko's eyes enlarge and she falls back. Ryuko watches how Nui grows taller and taller until she is a giant, ripping off the roof of the bus. With an obsessed smile she looks down at her.

"Weird as fuck you say?" Nui asks grinning and leans her head towards Ryuko until they almost touch her. Ryuko is like an ant compared to Nui.

"FUCK OFF!" Ryuko screams angry.

"Kind of funny if you think about it. The Kamui won't save you, sweetheart! Trying to leave everything behind but a lil pile of worthless clothes that forgot it's place at the life fibers."

"At least he didn't forgot his heart and soul, unlike you, you stupid bitch!" Ryuko counters. Nui laughs.

"He's not just a Kamui, he's also a friend!" she says and touches the wall with her back. Nui shrinks and lands in the bus hall where she walks towards Ryuko, stopping at Mako. She pats her hair.

"I bet you miss her too, don't you?"

"Why would you care?!" Ryuko asks. Nui suddenly materializes a scissor blade and throws it next to Ryuko's head. The blade almost hit her, it cut off a few streaks. The second part of the blade Nui materialized is used as a tool to lean her arms on. She looks into Ryuko's face.

"I bet you feel invincible because of this "Senketsu" boy. Even more if you got your little Mako too!"

"Piss off! You're fucking dead and you still annoy me! Let me have ONE fucking normal dream for fuck sake!"

"Awww, are you angry at me? Darling, you'll never lose me anymore, I'm part of you, just like Satsuki, Mako and your other weird friends. And me being alive again means that we can have fun even when you're not taking your beauty sleep." Nui smiles.

"Shut it." Ryuko answers. Nui giggles and grabs the blades.

"You know, Ryuko... since you really are a poor little thing and because you love me so much, maybe I'll let you sleep in peace just once." Nui suggests and plays around with the blades. Suddenly, she performs a slash attack towards Mako but stops it in the last moment.

"NO! DON'T." Ryuko says. Nui holds the blades at Mako's neck and then turns her head towards Ryuko.

"Just this once, sweetie. Au revoir." Nui says and dissolves into life fibers that rise up into the air and vanish. Time continues again. Mako looks around confused and notices that the bus roof is gone.

"Huuu!?! How is that possible!?! Imagine it would start raining now!" Mako mentions. Ryuko takes a breath and stands up, walking to Mako.

"Ryuko, what happened, you..."

"Oh god, Mako."

"Ryuko, what..." Mako mumbles worried, seeing her friend scared. The bus continues to drive even with the lack of a roof, and when both friends come back home, Ryuko feels uncomfortable. She looks around the entire time to see if Nui is somewhere. The young woman can't say if this is a sick game made by Nui Harime or if Nui actually said the truth. Suddenly, Ryuko hears a voice.

"Hey! Hello?" she hears and wakes up. Senketsu woke her up. She notices that she cuddles him actually. Senketsu looks at Ryuko worried.

"Are you alright?" her cloth friend asks.

"I... I had a nightmare... that's this fucking sickness." Ryuko answers.

"I'm sorry, Ryuko."

"It's okay... I'm used to it, and it wasn't as bad as before." Ryuko says.

"That's good. Let's try to sleep again. I'm here if you need me." Senketsu says. They both continue to sleep again.

The next day begins. It's 7:22 AM. Satsuki leaves her room. The CEO of REVOCS wears her white suit, as usual. She visits Ryuko's room and opens it slightly to see if everything is alright. Ryuko still sleeps with Senketsu, although Senketsu is awake and looks at Satsuki, waving towards her with one sleeve. Satsuki smiles and moves on, looking for the others. Sanageyama seems to make some

exercises, Nonon plays some quiet music, but Houka and Gamagoori seem to sleep. As for Nui, she seems to hear a clone telling some jokes, but apparently only to itself. Eventually, Satsuki leaves the dorms and enters the canteen. Briefly after, the others wake up and visit the canteen as well. The mood is nice and everyone gets something to eat. Satsuki and Nonon have a little conversation, while Ryuko and Mikisugi talk to each other as well. Sanageyama, Houka and Gamagoori investigate the little clone Sanageyama got. They're fascinated about such a little thing being so full of life somehow, especially Houka who writes down a few notes to collect data, of course.

"Are you still struggling with that guy?" Satsuki asks curious. Nonon shakes her head.

"Nah. Actually, I'm glad I'm not in a relationship anymore. Just gives you a feeling of liberty. And if I wanna talk with some men, I'll just invite our favourite monkey or the computer freak." Nonon grins. Satsuki chuckles.

"Heh... I sometimes ask myself if I am one of those people that could even have a relationship, you know?" Satsuki says.

"I think you could have a relationship if you ask me. Sooner or later, you'll find someone, don't worry about it. Yeah, people hate you because of auntie Ragyo, but that's totally stupid, you didn't do anything. It's the contrary actually." Nonon says. Satsuki sips some tea. Still bad.

"And yet everyone hates me. Because of my name, Kiryuin? Because I am the CEO of REVOCS? Or is it both?" she asks.

"I think these are all idiots. You're not like auntie Ragyo, don't let that sink into you. You ain't the problem. It's only your mum."

"That easier said than done, you know? Back then... we had an entire army. They didn't ask what our plans were, they simply did it. A few motivational but cold words here and there, a reward and people

did what we wanted. If you wanted to remove someone from school with force, you only had to point your finger at them, hell, you could have just attacked them and no one would have cared because of Honnouji's old school system. All the workers I have only work because they need the money - they think I'll become a second Ragyo. I feel stupid whenever I have to hold one of those annual speeches." Satsuki explains.

"Yeah of course you do. People think you're evil because you have Kiryuin as your name, but that's stupid. Hell, my dad was a damn mine worker, that doesn't make me one though. Never think you are evil because of your heritage, because you are not. Look at the Nudist Beach clowns. They like you... well okay, they are all naked weirdos and that's totally overkill, I mean, we've been there too, but who can say they have an entire organization of naked men and women on your side?" Nonon grins. Satsuki chuckles about that thought.

"Better than nothing, you say?"

"Better than nothing." Nonon answers. Ryuko and Mikisugi start laughing. And the three male four deva touch the clone's hair and are fascinated. It feels soft apparently. Tsumugu enters the room, annoyed, with Nui Harime behind him. She has handcuffs on.

"Satsuki, you have to visit the Arsenal first before visiting Tokyo, Iori wants to talk with you. We got a speedboat ready there by the way, once you arrive, a few soldiers will catch up with you." Tsumugu explains. Satsuki nods. Nui sits onto a chair and leans back, putting her feet on the table and lays them down like a cross so that no one is able to look under her dress. Well, she wouldn't mind it anyway probably. She looks at Ryuko.

"Heyyyyy, Ryuko! You look great today! Your prank yesterday was really amazing, I'm super surprised!" Nui grins.

"Thanks, annoy someone else now." Ryuko counters and talks with Mikisugi again. Nui watches Sanageyama walking to her, holding her

clone. She smiles at him. He however is a bit annoyed by her.

"Here. Your clone was running around in the base yesterday." Sanageyama says and carefully pushes the clone to Nui. He has some respect towards her now although he dislikes her of course. Nui free's herself from the handcuffs and takes the clone. The Nudist Beach soldiers and Tsumugu are surprised, but apparently, Harime doesn't want to attack someone at the moment. She puts her clone away.

"Why thank you, darling." Nui grins. Sanageyama sits back to the other two men and talks with them. Satsuki watches Nui and vice versa.

"Sooo, dearest Satsuki, how's it looking, we gonna annoy some people today? Can we kill someone? Sharing is caring after all! I got a few cool ideas, wanna hear?" Nui grins.

"No." Satsuki answers.

"Nwaa..."

"It's almost 8:30 AM, Harime. Take something from the buffet and eat, I don't want anyone to say we aren't good hosts." Satsuki says calm. Ryuko is amazed about how calm Satsuki is regarding Nui. Nui nods, jumps up and takes a plate, taking a look at the buffet. It's the usual stuff you could eat, nothing unusual. However, Nui seems to be picky, as she takes a look at everything.

"Seriously? No fish!?" Harime asks wondered and takes some vegetables. Tsumugu closes his arms and watches Nui. She walks back to the table and starts eating. Pretty quick too, as it only takes her about two minutes and she is done, which confuses Satsuki and Tsumugu slightly. Nui is unimpressed, but she smiles slightly and keeps her mouth shut thankfully.

At 8:45 AM, Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui visit the arsenal where Iori waits for Satsuki already. Ryuko keeps an eye on Nui who however just

looks around curiously and touches things that thankfully won't explode immediately or otherwise deal damage.

"Lady Satsuki, I did adjust the Wrath regalia and inserted a basic transformation system. Since I know you like your clothing style and want to keep it but also want to be prepared for a possible fight, I made a copy of your suit and stitched it into the Wrath regalia. Explaining the entire process would take time you do not have at the moment, the important thing however is that your suit works like a Goku-Uniform now. By pulling off one of the blue stripes on the left or right sleeve you can press down a needle that causes you to transform into your combat uniform. If you wish to change back into your civilian uniform, pull off the blue stripe under the shoulder armor and move the needle up again." Iori explains and gives Satsuki the suit version of the Wrath regalia.

"Thank you, Iori." Satsuki answers satisfied and changes her clothes quickly. Under her suit she wears a white shirt which fits Satsuki really well and surely would fit even better during summer time. During winter it's different of course, but then again, her suit keeps her warm and so this isn't a huge problem. Nui walks to Iori.

"So you're the local tailor here, yes?" Nui grins curious. Iori looks at Nui and takes a brief look at her, calm, but bored.

"I am." Iori answers calm. Now Nui looks at him and even raises his orange mask briefly.

"You look funny."

"So do you."

"Show me what you work on!"

"I won't."

"Why not?" Nui asks curious.

"I don't have to prove you anything." lori answers.

"You are only scared that I can tailor better clothes than you, which is true, but hey, you gotta give the others a chance, right?" Nui laughs.

"Which is why I won't show you them. Otherwise, you'd feel inferior." lori answers and smiles mischievous. Nui smiles evil.

"Not bad, little guy. Not bad." she answers and pats his head. Ryuko grabs Nui's arm and forces her to follow her and Satsuki outside of the arsenal. They leave the base. Their first target is the base of Nui Harime, where Hoomaru is located and working right now. Satsuki wants to talk with her briefly. Driving to said base doesn't take too long, about two hours. Apart from a few dumb jokes Nui delivers, not much interesting happens. Nui leads Satsuki to the base. Arriving at it, they find a huge entrance. Hoomaru knew they would appear as Nudist Beach send her a message via radio, which is why she stands at the entrance, waiting for the three of them to arrive. The car Satsuki and the other two use is a civilian transporter but with Nudist Beach interior in case they need to communicate quickly. Satsuki, Ryuko and Nui leave the car. While Nui just sits on the car and watches a few clones play around, Ryuko sits on a bench and leans back, talking with Senketsu. Satsuki approaches Hoomaru.

"Lady Satsuki. You are alive and well, I see." Hoomaru says relieved.

"Yes. What about you? Are you alright, Hoomaru?" Satsuki asks curious.

"Could be better. Harime keeps me up all night. Did Soroi send my message?" Hoomaru asks curious.

"Soroi is dead." Satsuki answers calm, although Hoomaru can still hear out the sadness.

"... what?"

"This man, Ichiro Harime, he killed him. He exploded right in front of me."

"... I apologize for that."

"It's okay." she says and sighs.

"You wanted to talk with me, Lady Satsuki." Hoomaru mentions. Satsuki nods and walks with her to Ryuko.

"Hoomaru, Harime trusts you, doesn't she?" Satsuki asks.

"Trust is a word that can be intensely stretched when it comes to her, but she does speak a lot with me, yes, and she wouldn't kill me if I say something against her."

"We'll be back soon. There is a room for you in the Nudist Beach HQ. Can I expect from you that you can keep an eye on Harime and control or keep her down when we are back? She didn't do much at the moment but I am afraid she might."

"You can't control Harime, neither can you keep her down, you should know that, Lady Satsuki. You can only tell her to not do a certain thing because it would end bad. Although she does behave a bit different than five years ago, but I'm not completely sure why, at least not now. I'm trying to find it out though."

"Behaving different? Should we be worried about her?"

"No, it's alright, actually, it's the contrary... I think it's a character change we could use to our advantage. I noticed Harime always hides under her duvet and appears shocked or paralyzed whenever she wakes up. The fact she always has a clone with her that seemingly protects her is also very untypical for her. I know you and Harime very long, and while I do not know a lot about you, I know pretty much everything there is to know about her. After all, I worked for her. She is less chaotic than before, that's for sure. I'm going to investigate this furthermore." Hoomaru explains.

"Good. Do not waste too much time on her though. Once we finish off this Ichiro, we'll deal with her anyway."

"I see." Hoomaru says. Ryuko listens to both of them the entire time already.

"There are still two things I need to say, Lady Satsuki."

"Yes?"

"The base here offers a great insight onto the security systems of Neo-REVOCS. I haven't been locked out yet, and I'm trying to send data to Nudist Beach once I reached the core of the system."

"That's good. I didn't knew this base existed at all."

"Can't blame you on that. It wasn't used for a long time and when it was used, then mainly for experiments. We produced the Standard Fiber Rifles here. A little attempt on hopping onto the weapon industry. It was a reaction against Nudist Beach constantly attacking REVOCS, that's why we did try other stuff every once in a while. There was also a factory that worked on cars but it was rendered inactive pretty soon." Hoomaru continues to explain. Satsuki nods.

"Interesting, good to know."

"The other thing is this... as I said, Harime does behave different. You should watch her whenever she wakes up. She constantly talks about this Ichiro Harime and about something like a "beyond" or "exile." And when she does, she... she doesn't sound like Nui, but... more like the..." Hoomaru mumbles. Satsuki is shocked and her eyes enlarge. Something rings the alarm bells.

"Harime chose her fate by killing her first human, Hoomaru, there is no need to try and have any hope, leave it with that." Satsuki orders steadily. Hoomaru nods.

"... as you wish." Hoomaru answers.

"Satsuki, we should go now, unless you wanna get back to the base at 3 AM." Ryuko mentions and stands up. Satsuki nods.

"You are right. Hoomaru, we'll see each other again. Stay safe." Satsuki smiles. Hoomaru nods. Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui enter the car, although Nui waves her hands to Hoomaru and shows her tongue before leaving. Hoomaru walks back into the base and thinks about Satsuki's words, but she can't really follow her order. After all these years, she finally learned to think for herself as well. And that's a good thing. Satsuki turns on the radio to hear the news while they are driving. They are in a little forest right now and head for the coast as it's the fastest way to Tokyo.

"... the automatic news system of the Prefecture of Nara. First message: The CEO of Neo-REVOCS, namely Ichiro Harime, is about to hold a speech regarding the plans and the future of the corporation. The speech will be broadcasted now." the three can hear via the robotic voice. Satsuki turns up the radio. Ryuko and Satsuki are somehow interested, while Nui is annoyed.

Several dozens of journalists and freelancers of various press agencies in and around Japan meet up in the Auditorium of Neo-REVOCS. Banner of Neo-REVOCS hang around everywhere, guards keep an eye on the people and Masaru prepares the podium. Years ago, the room was rather dark, and the only light that shined through was the one on the podium, with rainbow colors everywhere to glorify Ragyo Kiryuin. Today, the room is white, with a red ground, and plants everywhere. Wonderful lights hang on the ceiling and the walls.

And then, a huge light appears from the podium entrance, and steps are audible. Loud, and sharp ones. Ichiro Harime appears and leaves the entrance. He wears a pink shirt and yellow trousers. They do fit him well. His hair looks a bit more proper too now and less curly. He seems to have changed according to the current situation. People become quiet and Ichiro starts talking, while Masaru stays in the background, looking down to the countless people that look up at

him and Ichiro. Both Neo-REVOCS bosses stand on the podium. Light's on. Ichiro starts smiling.

"Heh..."

"I'll ask you one thing." he says calm.

"What is clothing?"

Silence.

"These were Ragyo Kiryuin's words once, as some probably know. Gross and despicable, I know. But apparently we have to ask this question even nowadays which appears as a cruel joke to me." Ichiro explains and smiles mischievous. Journalists talk quiet in the background.

"Weren't it the deeds of the Kiryuin family that made the world the horrible place it is today? A world where one fifth of the population suffers from an sickness, caused by nothing else than some cheap clothes? The Kiryuin family was the root of all evil, and now it's gone. What is left of it? A group of terrorists that call themselves "COVERS-sympathizers", attacking not just REVOCS buildings, no, everything. This is their legacy. A sickness, and terrorism. A tragic loss? Honestly: Not at all. They weren't worth the air they breathed in, neither the CEO, nor it's daughter and foster child. Cynical said, we shouldn't give a single fuck about them." Ichiro grins. The people start getting louder, they are surprised that he uses curse words and appears so directly.

"He's right!"

"A bit over the top, but he says the truth!"

"True that!"

"Yes... exactly. What I am trying to tell everyone by that is that we from Neo-REVOCS share the same opinion like every normal

human. We all agree that the Kiryuin's had to vanish to give this infamous yet full of potential filled company a revival. This is a chance for a new beginning, for a second try, and this is what Neo-REVOCS wants to symbolize. Better, stronger, more effective. My name is Ichiro Harime, and I will make sure we won't repeat the mistakes of our predecessors. And in order to emphasize on this new beginning, the corporation will take hands onto the Life fiber sickness and the COVERS-sympathizers. We are aware of our past, and we will wipe it out until there is nothing left. And then, we will shape a new future, from humans, for humans." Ichiro explains. People agree with him.

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"Shut off the radio, Satsuki, I don't want to hear this piece of shit talking anymore." Ryuko says.

"Ryuko is right, sadly, turn it off." Nui says. Satsuki turns the radio off and grumbles annoyed. Ryuko notices how angry Satsuki is right now.

"This asshole pisses me off. I thought he'd get flak all over the place now but they fucking agree with him!"

"I know, Ryuko. He annoys me as well..." Satsuki mentions quiet and continues driving to the bay of Tokyo...

The Tools Of A Tailor

AN: Thanks for the reviews again. This chapter should have come out yesterday already but I didn't had enough time but now it's there. :D Those who are interested in the story, please send me a message to my inbox if you can as I have something nice to show you - artworks for the story to be exact. Also, one more thing. I stated in the disclaimer that I would use links to music tracks and artworks here but sadly this doesn't work on . So I figured something else out. I told you about the artworks. Regarding the music, we'll do it this way. I will write down titles of music tracks from Kill La Kill and it's videogame, Kill La Kill IF every once in a while during certain encounters, mostly when it comes to a battle. You can then open up YouTube in a second window (on your computer or laptop) if you like and type down the track name in the search bar. Then you can listen to the track while reading. Trust me, it will intensify battles and it makes them even more enjoyable to read. It could look like this then.

(The track for this scene/battle is "Kill La Kill - Suck Your Blood."
Type it into YouTube and listen while reading if you like!)

This will be applied today. You don't have to do this of course, it's up to you. :) Anyway: Have fun reading! There's gonna be some fun action today again!

"... and so, I ask you again. What is clothing?"

...

"Clothing is the way forward. Not the "original Sin." Clothing is what developed us, what lead to evolution. Where would we be without it? In this very moment, the many factories of Neo-REVOCS all over the world produce the newest and certainly most remarkable fashion the world has ever seen. And regarding these fairly annoying COVERS terrorists - let us handle this. We can make sure this world becomes a place worth living for - and I guarantee, it won't take long."

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Some time later...

"No, we won't take a break, Nui, and don't you dare asking if we are there yet, then Imma stand up and kick your ass!" Ryuko mocks towards Nui. Nui nods and smiles.

"Oooohhh, cool! Can I kick your butt too?"

"Would both of you stop now! Ryuko, don't talk with Nui, Nui, if you want to talk, talk with me or your clones, but leave Ryuko alone." Satsuki orders evil. Nui shows Ryuko her tongue and leans back into the seat, laying her hands behind the back of her head, looking around. She also lays her legs crosswise. Next to Nui, a few clones sit there, but they aren't activated and therefore not much bigger than a little plushie. Ryuko looks out of the window. The sun shines today and snow fall isn't expected today, which is a nice variation to the usual weather.

"At least it doesn't snow today." Ryuko mentions.

"Yes, that's true. I heard there will be a bad storm in the next days however." Satsuki answers. Ryuko raises her eye brows.

"You know what that means." Satsuki grins.

"Hell yeah. Little snow ball battle, huh?"

"Indeed."

"Would it count as a two versus one since I got Senketsu with me?"

"Well, let's ask Senketsu." Satsuki suggests. Senketsu looks at Satsuki.

"You wouldn't accept getting hit with a snow ball by a suit, would you, Satsuki?" Senketsu asks and grins - well, he would grin if he could, but it's well audible.

"I would not. But Ryuko would."

"Yeah, right. Senketsu wouldn't throw a snow ball at me." Ryuko grins.

"Are you sure about that?" Satsuki asks back.

"I suggest we do a one versus one versus one then." the suit suggests. Ryuko and Satsuki look at Senketsu curious, then they look into each others eyes. Nui uses a few life fibers she pulled out of her fingers to work on a little puppet of her's in the meantime, which is why she doesn't intervene.

"Wouldn't be a bad idea." Ryuko answers. Satsuki nods.

"Then we do this. You should work together nonetheless, I can dodge well."

"She can't dodge at all, Senketsu, don't worry about it."

"Hah, I'm glad if I can form a snow ball already. Can I do that with my sleeves?" he asks.

"I'll help you find a way." Ryuko grins. Satsuki turns the car to the highway exit and heads into inland as they mostly drove around the coast until now. According to their GPS, it's about one more hour of time left until they reach Tokyo.

And it indeed takes some time. In the meantime, Mikisugi, Tsumugu and the Elite-four plan out what to do next. Especially interesting should be the largest Neo-REVOCS factory of Japan, as the destruction of it could reward Nudist Beach with a lot of life fibers necessary for powerful suits and ammo for their weapons. It also would weaken Neo-REVOCS presence in Japan and give some

valuable data for Houka he could analyze. A factory as huge and well guarded as this one surely has something interesting to tell. Houka thinks of that the entire time already since the start of the conversation - and if the new clothes Neo-REVOCS produces have some sort of switch too, it could expose them. And by attacking said factory and stealing it's data, they could find that out.

"... it is however not a bad idea. I need to say though that I think a covert operation would be more beneficial for the cause, after all, this is their largest factory. I can remember well that the largest REVOCS factories are connected to the main server inside the HQ in Tokyo. Miss Hoomaru and I have to see if we can hack into their systems, otherwise, we'd had to send an agent into the facility to manually get access to it. Only by accessing their systems we can unlock the factories by ourselves and attack them. Their walls are well constructed and we would need a lot of firepower to get into the place. And based on our current knowledge, Neo-REVOCS seems to deploy new units quickly."

"And who did you had in mind?" Tsumugu asks.

"I don't think "who" is the question - the question is, how. The person that could enter the facility probably has to have the same height as the Ashigaru units as they all have the same height and of course we need a disguise." Houka answers.

"In any case, it would be good if we could get access then. If I look at those literal soldiers they have... I mean, the Ashigaru are fairly simple to fight against, however, those Samurai, they are a pain in the ass." Mikisugi mentions.

"Once my uniform is ready they'll wish they would have never applied to work for Neo-REVOCS." Nonon grins.

"Valkyrie-Regalia, wasn't it?" Gamagoori asks Nonon. Nonon nods.

"Oh god. I know what she is going to play." Sanageyama says and laughs. Nonon giggles. Suddenly, red dots appear on the monitor

with each second which confuses the group. The lieutenants take a look at their consoles and work faster, then they zoom out of the map. All of Japan is visible now - there are red dots everywhere. Mikisugi and Tsumugu take a look at it eagerly.

"What are these guys planning again..." Tsumugu mumbles silent.

"Seems like Neo-REVOCS attacks potential HQs of COVERS." Gamagoori mentions.

"Mhm." Sanageyama mumbles.

"Quite a smart idea. Neo-REVOCS attacks COVERS to appear more trustworthy." Houka mentions.

"You think they worked together? That would explain how Neo-REVOCS found out about all these HQs. You can't find out their locations in such a short time, and they certainly don't use drones, that wouldn't fit the corporation at all..." Sanageyama answers. Gamagoori thinks.

"Yes. In the end, they still produce clothes." he says.

"You gotta admit though their soldiers do have a neat style." Nonon grins.

"Stylish or not, Life fibers is life fibers. We gotta move on with your uniforms. If the people actually start thinking Neo-REVOCS are something like good guys, we are getting into trouble since then they can mark us as a hostile organization as well. And we all know that nowadays corporations can do what they want - hell, schools attacking other schools is common as well." Mikisugi says...

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"... chosen by the life fibers..."

"... you failure..."

"... this is your fault..."

"... receive your punishment, for you are the greatest of failures!"

Nui awakes and looks around. She blinks three times. She nod off during the drive. After one more hour, Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui arrive in Tokyo. The view is great from here. The largest buildings of the city are visible, that includes of course the huge Neo-REVOCS complex, but the Honnouji-Academy is also well visible. The highway the three are on is near a cliff, and the water looks really clean and nice today. Satsuki turns the car to the exit, taking the direct way to the harbor district of Tokyo. Lots of transport ships are in the harbor today, some of them are currently loaded with new goods and containers. In general, there's much going on here, but the three head to a point of the harbor that is rather quiet at the moment. Cranes, Containers, little offices and warehouses, that's what you can all see. There is a wall which is about four meters high which fences off the district from the other parts of the city. Behind the walls, there are mostly apartments, most of them being pretty ugly and cheap. Satsuki takes a look at the GPS, seeing that they reached their destination now - a seemingly little place in the outer parts of the harbor. There aren't a lot of people walking around there, which makes it a good spot for hiding a little speedboat. After all, they don't need a battleship to get two blades out of the water.

"Still can't believe I'm gonna dive down a fucking bay now. Kinda crazy." Ryuko mentions.

"Yes." her sister reacts.

"Can you swim, Ryuko!?" Nui asks curious.

"Yeah I can."

"Wow, that is cool! You like to swim?"

"Why would you care?"

"I want to know what my favorite persons in the entire world like! So, Ryuko. Do you like to swim?" she asks. Ryuko grins slightly, then appears annoyed again.

"Why don't you just see it for yourself?"

"Can your Kamui swim too? Hey! Little suit!"

"What's up, scarface?" Senketsu asks. Ryuko laughs.

"That was mean." Nui pouts.

"You started it." Senketsu answers cold. Nui giggles.

"I gotta keep that in mind. Scarface..." Ryuko mumbles.

"We've arrived." Satsuki comments and stops the car. She stops at one of the parking lots. Satsuki, Ryuko and Nui leave the car, with Ryuko watching Nui carefully. Satsuki walks forward. The group passes by the many containers, reaching the quay. Waves hit the quay. The water looks beautiful today.

"Ryuko, you should have seen how the harbor workers looked like when we arrived in Tokyo years ago after Honnouji sank." Satsuki mentions.

"Yeah, how'd they react?" Ryuko asks.

"In total disbelief. One of them asked me if we seriously just sank an entire island."

"What did you say?"

"I explained to him that we did a social experiment which took an explosive turn. Which is right somewhere, so I haven't even lied." Satsuki grins. Ryuko giggles, Senketsu makes an impressed look.

"You blew up the entire island!?" Nui asks curiously.

"So to speak, yes."

"You truly are crazy." Nui grins. A few Nudist Beach soldiers leave a little warehouse and catch the group. They meet up with the soldiers that lead them to the speed boat.

"Hello. Boss said you'd come here." the soldier mentions.

"Yes." Satsuki answers. There is a group of Nudist Beach soldiers sitting in the little warehouse with some windows upstairs. Seven soldiers, to be exact. Ryuko and Nui notice they all carry sniper rifles. These sniper rifles seem to be special fabricated by Nudist Beach and are heavily orientated on the design of the british AX50 sniper rifle. Compared to that, Nui's REVOCS standard fiber rifle looks old, which she hasn't holstered at the moment however. She can just materialize it. How? No clue. Life fiber secrets, Ryuko thinks. Nui smiles as she see's the weapons.

"Lady Satsuki, we've prepared a speed boat for you. It's behind the warehouse at the quay. Since we are in Tokyo, Neo-REVOCS presence is fairly high. We'll make sure the area is safe and we are going to take positions up on the roofs of the harbor warehouses and cranes. That way you can easily retrieve the weapons you are looking for." the soldier explains.

"Good. Try to not draw too much attention on yourself however. We can still defend ourselves." Satsuki says. Nui takes a look at one of the rifles and grabs it, playing around with it, spinning it on one of her fingers which is remarkable as the rifle is extremely heavy until one of the soldiers takes the rifle away from her.

"Are you crazy!?" the soldier asks aggressive.

"Nope, just curious about your funny little weapons!" Nui says and shows her tongue.

"We kicked your ass years ago, don't forget that!" another one mocks.

"Oh really, I feel like I did more than you silly boys and girls but it's great you gave your best!" Nui smiles. The soldier shakes his head annoyed. Ryuko grabs Nui by her arm and follows Satsuki out of the warehouse. She enters the speed boat - it's nothing special, it really is just a simple boat with which you can arrive at the Honnouji Academy in 20 minutes. The big sister investigates the console that moves the boat - seems simple enough even for people who never drove a boat. The other two women also enter the boat, with Nui sitting on the bench at the other end of the boat and Ryuko sitting between Nui and Satsuki. Satsuki starts the boat, and the Nudist Beach soldiers walk away. Ryuko holds her hands against her head, Satsuki notices that.

"You good, Sis?" Satsuki asks.

"Yeah, I'm cool. Just got a bit of an headache, haven't slept too well I guess." Ryuko smiles. Satsuki nods. Nui however switches her look between Senketsu who watches her and Ryuko.

...

Meanwhile, a door opens. Masaru sits in his office and works on the security systems of Neo-REVOCS, until Ichiro appears, seemingly excited.

"Masaru. Send an Ashigaru unit to the harbor district." his boss orders excited.

"Of course. Are there intruders?"

"Matoi, Kiryuin and Harime are at the harbor and got a bit of "support" by Nudist Beach, make sure they'll regret it. And send two Samurai's."

"Of course, master Ichiro." Masaru answers and clears his throat, while Ichiro leaves the room via the elevator. The young man sends out two units via a program that automatically activates an alarm in

the Arsenal, causing available soldiers to form a unit. He does however seem concerned.

"But why the Grand Couturier...?" he mumbles unsure about Ichiro's order.

...

Minutes pass. The group drives toward the area around the academy. There are no patrolling ships at the moment which is good timing for them. The waves are pretty chill today which makes everything simpler. And since the sun shines, the temperature in the water is despite the winter coldness rather acceptable. Maybe not for Satsuki, but Ryuko can probably endure it since she partially is life fibers and therefore has a tad warmer body temperature, and Senketsu can help too. Nui holds her hand in the water, noticing it truly is cold, which makes her laugh, since Ryuko has to dive down in a few minutes. Ryuko on the other hand notices a ship at the beach. Nui knows what she is looking at.

"The fuck is that ship doing there?" Ryuko smiles confused.

"Oh, that? I took it with me, wasn't in the mood to swim." Nui answers.

"You took the ship?!"

"Yup, yup! Who would have thought hijacking a ship would be so easy? There was just one little guy, I punched him down, Ryuko, you can't imagine how silly that was!"

"Yeah I bet it was funny as hell." Ryuko answers sarcastic.

"It was, but every fun has to end and now he is dead. At first I only wanted him to jump around a bit and be scared but then he attacked me." the psychopath smiles genuine.

"Ah, really? What a surprise... how did you even get back? I saw how you decapitated yourself, I still don't get it."

"Oh that wasn't very spectacular. Uhm, I think it was a week ago, Ichiro accidentally revived me, I think. Felt pretty cold at the beginning, even for me, but then it was fine. And sitting on top of the academy is marvelous. But now I think there are a lot of bad guys hanging around there so I wouldn't attend this school next time if I were you! Haha, I'm glad I'm not anyway, otherwise I'd be ashamed!" Nui provokes grinning.

"He revived you by accident? Who would revive you by accident!?"

"Don't know, ask him. Well, anyway, I took that ship and cruised around a few days cause the boat was stupidly slow."

"Aha. And why do you have a problem with him again?"

"Cause he's stupid."

"And what are we if you have a bigger problem with him than us?" Senketsu asks.

"You are funny AND stupid. Besides, what do you mean with "we", you're just like me, dear... uh... Senketsu."

"Senketsu's never gonna be like you, Nui. He'll always be more human than you could have ever been." Ryuko answers annoyed.

"Senketsu is a poor little guy, I bet he just doesn't know what defines a true life fiber like me. I'm glad I am one."

"And yet you fight against your own people. Either all of this is a huge joke which wouldn't even surprise me or you are serious, but then I seriously don't get why you are like this."

"Ah, Ryuko, do you always have to understand someones intentions, especially mine? Can't you just have a little fun in your life without thinking the entire time? I bet if you would be like me, your life would

be much more fun. You seem very sad and stubborn, but hey, I still love you." Nui smiles.

"You know, Nui, I like my humanity, I'll gladly keep it. In my entire life, I was a huge asshole and I still am to some people, and I can't blame them. Back at high school, I was in a gang and believe me, we've been real assholes. Some people probably still suffer from what me and my gang did back then and I can't change it but I hope I can be forgiven for that some day. Unlike you. You know exactly what you do and you love it because... eh, I don't even know."

"That's because I'm not boring." Nui says smiling.

"Pff." Ryuko shakes her head.

"By the way Ryuko, what about this Manga you talked about once?" Satsuki asks curiously.

"You mean that fantasy thingy with the heroine and the villain that have to fight against something even more evil, causing them to work together?"

"Exactly."

"Ah fuck, right, yeah, that Manga is great, we could visit a library real quick when we are done here if you'd like. I bet you'll love it." Ryuko answers.

"Sounds good. If a Manga makes you want to read, it has to be good." Satsuki grins.

"Oh yes, yes it is, Satsuki." Ryuko grins. Briefly after, they arrive near the Honnouji-Academy. The scissor blades have to be here somewhere. Satsuki looks around at the academy with a despicable look on her face, while Nui relaxes and Ryuko readying up.

"So that's where they are?"

"Mhm. As already said, Iori thinks, Senketsu can sense the blades. I suppose it's because of his fiber structure. This is still strange to me if I have to be honest." Satsuki explains. Nui raises her eye brows in concern.

"What fiber structure?" she asks.

"None of your business, freak." Ryuko answers.

"No, seriously, what fiber structure? Who tailored this? Is this still the Kamui your stupid daddy made?" Nui asks confused. Satsuki and Ryuko look concerned towards each other and then to Nui, with Senketsu pinching his eye.

"Why are you so interested in that?" Satsuki asks.

"Is this the same old Kamui years ago or is this a new one?"

"A new one. Iori took a look at it already." Ryuko answers.

"And did he took a look at EVERYTHING?" Nui asks worried.

"Yes he did. Eye, sleeves, everything." Ryuko explains. Nui nods slowly.

"I hope so, sweetheart." Nui says, looking at Senketsu in distrust.

"Yeah, right. Idiot." Ryuko says annoyed and prepares for the diving session.

The scissor blades have to be here somewhere, and if it's correct what Iori said to Satsuki, then it shouldn't be too hard to retrieve them. Ryuko inhales and exhales, looking at the water. The academy isn't too far away from them. Satsuki looks at Ryuko calm, but trustworthy. Then she nods to her. Ryuko nods back. Nui closed her arms, looking at Senketsu. Is she worried about Senketsu or why does she behave like this? Seeing Nui like this isn't usual, that's for sure.

"Good luck, Ryuko."

"Thanks." she says and jumps into the cold water. Briefly after, she is gone. Nui looks at Satsuki and vice versa.

"Care to tell me what this was all about?" Satsuki asks serious.

"Did she took the suit without thinking for one second?" Nui asks confused.

"I don't know, I wasn't there when she found it. Why are you so interested in the suit? You don't care about others anyway, stop joking. Hoomaru is your ally and yet you don't care about her either."

"Because Hoomaru is not like you and Ryuko. You'd be surprised, my dear. This Kamui is different, I can see that a mile away. And I can tell this Kamui is a trap." Nui mentions.

"Look, I'm not one hundred percent sure about the Kamui either, but lori investigated it and he hasn't seen a single problem, otherwise he would have said that."

"Your wannabe Couturier lori doesn't have a single plan about life fibers, it's cruel enough he works with machines and not with his hands. And you don't have an idea either." Nui answers uppish.

"If you say so. I know enough about people like you and I told it to you once, I'll tell it to you again: nothing good will happen to you. Especially not with the way you behave the entire time." Satsuki answers and sits down although she is worried as well about Senketsu's return.

"You truly are the cutest human I've ever met." Nui smiles.

"And unlike you, I stayed human."

"You say that as if I was human at all." Nui grins.

"You never were a human, yes. But so isn't her Kamui. And yet he is a better person than you."

Nui simply laughs. Satsuki shakes her head and takes a jug of a water battle...

Ryuko dives down. Senketsu formed a part of his cloth body into a mask for Ryuko which allows her to breath. As a hybrid, she doesn't have too many problems diving and can sustain with water filled lungs longer than other humans, but it still would orientate her. Eventually, she is able to see the first few buildings of the city covered by plants and little sea animals. The sun light barely reaches the buildings, and the more she dives down, the harder it gets to look around. Senketsu however can see everything rather clearly. He can also talk. Ryuko swims towards the ruins that are left from the academy, hoping she could find the blades there. By moving away debris and interior with her fiber powers, she can move through the various buildings and streets of the sunken city. Old pictures, interior, walls covered by plants, a few dead life fibers - it all appears very surreal, after all, this is the place she lived at once. It's ice cold down here and only Senketsus warm body helps her.

Ryuko and Senketsu look around. Fishes swim pass them.

"We gotta dive down some more." Senketsu mentions. The voice is partially dull, since they are underwater after all. However, Ryuko can still hear him well enough, and so she does a thumbs up and continues diving. There is an old park full of plants and fishes. It looks beautiful in it's own way. Even in destruction, life finds it's ways. She takes a brief look at it and then continues. Then, she dives down further until she reaches a point where the sun light is almost non existent anymore.

"Hmm. I do sense something. That's weird. We gotta swim to our left." Senketsu says. Ryuko swims to their right and through an old alley, swimming down the city. She is at the borders of the city. There is a rather broken wall which she kicks open, making a hole in it. There is a little football field.

"Okay... this feels right already. Now forward." he says. Ryuko swims forward, above the football field and dozens of old little slum like houses until she reaches the very end of the city.

"They are close. That is weird." he mentions confused. Ryuko continues swimming.

"And now we have to dive down more." he says. Ryuko dives down even deeper. There is almost no light anymore. Just a slight bit left to recognize at least the edges and shapes of buildings. Senketsu however can see everything far better than she does. His vision is red and orange-ish. Suddenly, Ryuko gets pushed away by something behind her. Seems like it was a shark.

"Huh, a shark." Senketsu says calm. He looks around. The shark turns back.

"Looks like he wants to play. Stay ready." he says. Ryuko holds her thumb up and then forms fists. The shark approaches them.

"Now!" Senketsu says. Ryuko punches in front of her with full power, hitting the sharks face, causing him to fling away and landing into a building.

"Damn, Ryuko. That wasn't bad." Senketsu chuckles. Ryuko forms a "OK" gesture with her right hand and swims forward, through an destroyed building until she finds herself at a place she can still remember well... a bridge. The bridge that connects Honnô-Island with Honnô-City and the Academy. And there, Senketsu can see something on the other end of it.

"I think I can see them. Ryuko! Swim forward. You gotta swim over the bridge." he says. Ryuko swims faster. And indeed, something shimmers there. As she reaches the object, she touches it. Feels good. And trusty.

There they are. Now it's certain.

These are the scissor blades she just touched. Ryuko holds her hands on the grips of both blades and tries to pull them out with all the power she has, and as she succeeds, a huge blow of sand and dust whirls up. It throws Ryuko away a bit. She holds the blades up and see's the silhouettes. They are dirty and grown with plants, but still as noble and powerful as ever, it seems. Quickly and motivated, Ryuko swims up again, holding them tight.

"Great work!" Senketsu says relieved. You can't see it, but Ryuko is relieved as well. She holds the blades well, then she swims up, faster and faster, ready to use the blades. Them being dirty is not important. The important thing is the fact she has them now, and with that, they can finally kill Ichiro and later on Nui. Like a shark, Ryuko swims up, knowing exactly what she wants to do, swimming up to the back side of the boat, seeing Nui's hair. She slowly reaches out of the water without making noises. Nui doesn't notice that.

"Ah so that's how you met up with Hoomaru?" Satsuki asks.

"Yep."

"And you did kill that guy even though you wanted to spare him?"

"Yep. But again, he attacked me first. I wanted to let him go but nooooooooo, people always want to be mean." Nui grins.

"I see."

"Well you know, in the end it felt nice. It's like playing with ants." Nui smiles and suddenly gets her hair pulled, causing Nui to scream.

"AH, SATSUKI HELP ME, A SHARK ATTACKS ME!" she screams and falls into the water. Ryuko laughs dirty just like Senketsu. Satsuki raises her eye brows impressed and then see's Ryuko jumping onto the boat again, holding the blades steady and proud. She presents them to Satsuki and smiles. Nui climbs back onto the boat, fully soaked.

"Good work, you got them back." Satsuki smiles. Ryuko nods and then looks at Nui with an evil smile.

"Damn, Nui, you're completely soaked, you gotta change your clothes." Ryuko grins. Nui chuckles happily.

"I'm starting to love you more and more, Ryuko."

"... what?"

"Hahaha!"

"Well then I gotta figure out something else to annoy you." she grins evil.

"Nwaaaa." Nui pouts. As if Nui seriously likes it when she is mean to her, Ryuko thinks confused. But anyway, Ryuko sits down, getting warmed up by Senketsu.

"Well that was quicker than expected." Satsuki says.

"Mhm, yeah. Come on, let's go back, not really game to get a cold." Ryuko suggests. Satsuki nods and starts the motor. Nui smiles at both of them but then looks at the Academy, noticing something apparently.

"Hey wait a second, little Satsuki." Nui says suddenly. What is up with her?

"Why?"

"Look over there." Nui mentions. Ryuko, Satsuki and Senketsu look at the academy. Life fibers crawl up the walls. Ryuko pinches her eyes.

"You see that?" Nui asks. Ryuko and Satsuki nods.

"Evil things that need to die." Nui says evil. She really is angry about the life fibers, but why? They can really hear out the hate. It's worse

than the hate she felt when Ryuko cut her arms off, and certainly bigger than the hate towards humans.

"Can't believe you said that." Ryuko mentions.

"Let's kill them now." Nui says evil and takes out her Standard fiber rifle. She aims at the life fibers.

"No! Wait. It's fine, Harime. We'll go back there later on. Then we can eliminate them and more, probably. We should go back for now." Satsuki mentions. Nui rolls with her eyes.

"They are the weaklings... not me..." Nui mumbles hurt and full of hate and aims at a bunch of life fibers, she even shows her tongue, that's how concentrated she is.

"Stop it, Harime. It won't end well if we start attacking now." Satsuki orders.

"Haven't you heard Satsuki, you asshole!? Put away your fucking gun!" Ryuko mocks and pushes Nui back. Nui falls onto the bench and slowly stands up again. Without a word, she puts the weapon away, sitting down, but they can clearly see the hate, they can feel it, it's like an aura.

"The fuck is wrong with you, dude?! Didn't they bake you cake when you died or what?!" Ryuko asks angry. Nui doesn't answer and simply looks at Tokyo, specifically to the Neo-REVOCS HQ. Ryuko shakes her head and sits down. Followed up, Satsuki drives back.

"... where's Hoomaru when I need her..." Nui mumbles quiet with a smile. Ryuko saw that Nui mumbled something to herself but she didn't understand a word. She shrugs her head as Senketsu looks at Ryuko in confusion and starts cleaning up the blades.

Meanwhile, the mood in Tokyo is rather quiet and comfortable and the snipers hold their positions on the roofs. Via radio they send status reports or do some chit chat.

"I'll be honest with you guys, once we are back home, first thing Imma do is making myself some real neat Ramen! Haven't been eating that in a while!" the sniper on the harbor crane says and smiles.

"Man, Ramen is just awesome." one of his companions adds to this.

"My mother had a good recipe, I think I can find it later on when we are back ho..." and suddenly, the soldier stops mid-sentence. Briefly after, the radio chatter continues, and you can hear a weapon or something else metallic falling to the ground.

"Yoko! You there?! Shit, I think Yoko's been hit. Keep your eyes open, there's..." and a shot is audible, the sniper has gone quiet. More shots fall.

"THEY KNEW WE WERE HERE, HOW... !?"

More and more snipers fall, until only the one on the crane is left. He looks around with his rifle and investigates the rooftops. The snipers are all dead. Their corpses are pretty ugly - three of them died by slash attacks from a melee weapon, the other three due to gunshots. Their torsos are shot open, and blood leaves their bodies.

"Ah fuck..." the sniper mumbles. As the sniper stands up, his Torso is pierced by a huge Katana.

"Rest well, for you are a sheep, that will not endure the pain this world will suffer through." a huge man in an impressive armor says. The sniper collapses on the ground and bleeds out.

This is one of the Samurai units of Neo-REVOCS. They wear huge armor in dark red colors, made out of alloys and partially life fibers, and a helmet that appears to be steel. The inner part of the helmet however reveals life fibers moving through it. The same counts for the coat that is attached on the shoulders. The coat, or cloak, as it doesn't fully cover up the body, but only most of the back, reduces the pain of the wearer, and increases their strength. Due to their

huge and impressive armor, they are unable to move quickly, but in exchange to that, defeating one of them is a challenge, and only if two or more people work together, they can actually beat one of them, as you'd have to find a way to destroy or remove their armor first. A huge weapon or powerful gun could pierce through the armor however. The Samurai puts his Katana back into the sword sheath and looks to the bay. The speedboat Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui are on is coming closer. Ashigaru move to various parts of the harbor and get ready for a battle.

Satsuki meanwhile drives the boat towards the harbor. They should arrive in about two minutes. Nui pouts bored and looks around while holding her weapon. She looks at the ocean, then Ryuko, then Satsuki and eventually the harbor, in this order. Ryuko at the moment chats a bit with Senketsu.

"So, Senketsu, you felt how cold it was in the water too, right?" she asks her friend.

"Yeah... but it's not as bad as with you probably. Feels uncomfortable but there is worse. Satsuki would have frozen probably."

"Yeah. Well you know, Satsuki ain't that big on swimming anyway, she doesn't like getting soaked and dirty." Ryuko grins. Senketsu chuckles.

"I'm not." Satsuki agrees calm. Nui looks at Ryuko, with Senketsu looking back at her.

"So you've lighted up like a forest fire, Kamui?" Nui asks curious and smiles.

"Like a forest fire is a bit much, but yeah, it got kinda warm on me."

"Ah. Bet it had to hurt. And how?" Nui asks grinning, thinking that Senketsu burning away is funny.

"I've protected Ryuko when we fell down to earth again."

"Sounds stupid." she comments.

"But honestly... I haven't felt that much." Senketsu answers. Ryuko is surprised by that.

"Really?" she asks. Nui looks at Satsuki. They've arrived at the harbor again.

"We've arrived." Satsuki mentions and climbs up the ladder next to them which hangs on the quay.

"Yeah, it wasn't as bad as it looked like. I mean, it did hurt though. Hey, Scarface... you... you've seen these white fibers as well, did you?" Senketsu asks Nui. Nui looks at Senketsu and sighs, then smiles.

"Could be." she answers and slowly stands up, while Ryuko binds her shoes quickly.

Satsuki walks into the warehouse. No one is there, as expected. She takes a look at the watch. About 4:50 PM. Rush hour might be annoying but sometimes you have to get through it as well, she thinks. In any case, she walks to the warehouse doors and opens it, and then, all of a sudden, Ashigaru-gunners appear on the roofs, and a Samurai in the middle of the street turns around and draws his Katana, aiming at her.

"Kiryuin!" the Samurai screams.

(AN: The Track for this battle is called "KILL la KILL - Suck Your Blood." Type it into Youtube's search bar and listen while reading. Enjoy!)

"Oh, great." Satsuki mentions. The Ashigaru start shooting. Satsuki quickly jumps into cover, bullets fly over her. She quickly pulls off one of the blue stripes on her suit and activates her Wrath-Regalia.

Followed up, she runs to the Samurai, deflecting the bullets of the Ashigaru, hitting the gunners that fell down to the ground. Then, Satsuki jumps up and performs an air slash attack which is parried by the Samurai. Both of them start a duel.

Nui and Ryuko hear the gunshots and enter the warehouse.

"Well so much about support." Ryuko says and holds the scissor blades tight in her right hand. Nui runs up the stairs of the warehouse, taking cover at the windows.

"Oh great, lot's of douchebags!" Nui smiles.

"You know what to do!" Ryuko yells at her.

"You got it, love!" Nui giggles and starts shooting the Ashigaru that concentrate their fire on Nui. Ryuko leaves the warehouse and pulls the needle on her gauntlet while running, and she transforms into Senketsu Azami. Satsuki seems to be in trouble with the Samurai due to his huge armor.

"You can not beat me, Kiryuin!" the Samurai says uppish and punches Satsuki's face. Satsuki however isn't impressed and continues fighting.

"Is that all you got?" she provokes and attacks again, but the armor is too strong and all that happens is a few sparks appearing. The Samurai grabs Satsuki's Katana and hits her with the scabbard in the torso, then kicking her away, which causes Satsuki to stumble away a few steps. As the Samurai is about to attack Satsuki again, suddenly, Ryuko appears from the side and strikes down his Katana with both scissor blades, ramming it into the ground. Ryuko smiles at the Samurai who can't move.

"Ever fought naked, baby?" Ryuko smiles and blinks. Satsuki deflects bullets in the background, Ryuko kicks away the Samurai, and so, he loses his Katana. Ryuko attacks the Samurai with two slow but powerful attacks for each blade. A few blood drops appear

through the armor. Nui watches Ryuko fighting the Samurai and notices the cracks that appeared on the armor, and so, she shoots the Samurai, blowing off the torso armor. The Samurai stumbles. Satsuki rolls back, throwing the grip of the Samurai's Katana onto his face, making him dizzy.

"Now, Ryuko!" Satsuki screams. Ryuko runs to the samurai, enhancing the Scissor blades and strikes at him, causing him to fling into the air. His armor explodes, making him naked.

"SEN-I-SOSHITSU!" she screams. Satsuki and Ryuko give each other a high five.

...

"Master Ichiro, they just eliminated the Samurai..." Masaru says worried to Ichiro who smiles.

"Yes I know, I just saw it. Send another Ashigaru-unit."

"But we cannot beat them with..."

"Send... the unit. I need time to get over there." he says and stands up, leaving the office. Masaru nods and runs to the computer at his office.

"WE NEED ANOTHER ASHIGARU UNIT AT THE PORT OF TOKYO, NOW!" Masaru screams as Ichiro leaves.

...

And so, briefly after, more Ashigaru units appear from the streets of Tokyo and spread out, attacking Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui who leaves the warehouse, laughing about their enemies. She meets up with Ryuko and Satsuki.

"Look, even more douchebags to shoot!" Nui smiles and aims at the swordsmen.

"You think that shit's funny?!" Ryuko asks confused.

"Of course she does." Satsuki says and attacks the swordsmen. Ryuko follows up and starts wall running on the containers next to them, then jumping off and performing a powerful attack from above, hitting several swordsmen with her scissor blades. Satsuki isn't hit by the swordsmen as her Wrath-Regalia improves her speed and dodge abilities. Suddenly, one of the container is blown open, and a Samurai appears out of it.

"Sheeps that belong back to their herd, listen up!" the Samurai screams and draws his Katana.

"Shut up, dude!" Ryuko yells at the Samurai and runs towards him.

"Oh, oh." the Samurai mumbles as Ryuko runs towards him and is hit by her, blown back into the container. Life fibers leave his armor thanks to the hit and gather into Ryuko's body and Senketsu Azami, causing her to feel stronger. Satsuki starts punching away swordsmen with her Katana, and suddenly, Ryuko rams the purple blade into the ground and aims her free hand at the flying Ashigaru. Life fibers spread out of her hand, grabbing the flying Ashigaru.

"WHAT THE FUCK!?" Ryuko screams confused by this new technique, and Senketsu is impressed as well. She throws the Ashigaru into the container. Nui shoots at two Ashigaru at the harbor crane, and as she tries to shoot once more, she gets hit into the shoulder. Blood flows out, and by accident, she shoots the rifle, hitting the crane house. The crane explodes, the Ashigaru fly into the air, Nui smiles and kisses the air.

"Have a good one, my dears!" she smiles. The naked Samurai runs through the battlefield and leaves it, screaming and ashamed of what Ryuko just did to him. Satsuki throws some more Ashigaru into the container, piling them up until about twenty of them, including the Samurai, are stacked in it. Nui meets up with Ryuko and see's the pile of bad guys, aiming at them. She reloads the gun and uses some of the blood that left her shoulder, improving the power of the

next shot. Then, she shoots the group, and Ryuko uses life fibers to close the doors. An explosion is audible, and smoke leaves the edges of the container. Eventually, Ryuko cuts off the fibers. They dissolve. Satsuki walks to the walls to fight off the last Ashigaru-swordsmen while Ryuko and Nui deal with the spare gunners on the roofs. The container door opens. The Samurai leaves the box. He's completely black and full of ashes and dead fibers. As he see's Nui smiling at him, he raises his hands.

"I'M WALKING ALREADY, DON'T SHOOT!" he screams at Nui, with her laughing at him. As Satsuki deals with the last Ashigaru, she runs to their car at the parking lot to see if everything is alright with it, and it indeed is. As Satsuki turns around to meet up with Ryuko and Nui, she's suddenly greeted by a punch in the face, leading her to fall to the ground, and she loses her Katana, as this was unexpected. As she looks up, Ichiro stands in front of her, smiling down at her mischievous.

(AN: The Track for this scene is "Blumenkranz by Sapphire" - type it into YouTube and listen to it while reading. This is Ichiro Harime's theme btw.)

"Welcome back to Tokyo, Satsuki Kiryuin." Ichiro smiles, standing in front of Satsuki who looks up at him calm, but annoyed. She does not answer.

"Well, what a shame you don't have the scissor blades with you right now. You think they will help you?" Ichiro asks curious.

"Let's find it out." she answers and slowly stands up, with Ichiro nodding.

"You see, I am not in the mood to fight at the moment, that would be a waste of time." he explains and walks towards the groups car, investigating it and touching the engine hood, knocking on it two times.

"What a great vehicle." he says and materializes life fibers that spread into the engine and the various parts of the car.

"What are you planning?" she asks calm but curious.

"You see, Satsuki..." he begins and walks away from the car as it slowly starts smoking up.

"... the world I come from, where the life fibers come from, is a world that dies. All I am doing is making sure my race will survive the challenges of this immensely huge universe." he explains. The car incinerates. The gunshots end. Seems like Ryuko and Nui are done fighting.

"And your world is one we know well. It has a lot of potential, and to be quite honest, if it wouldn't be for you inferior beings, I'd love to live here, but as we both know, you sometimes have to throw out the trash. And if you can recycle something, you do that too. Why waste resources?" he asks. Satsuki pinches her eyes and watches him. She grabs her Katana again and puts it into the scabbard.

"You remind me of a person I despise." Satsuki says.

"By the name of Ragyo Kiryuin, I suppose? Mhm. Could be, but I'm glad I share the same... you would call it "genes, like my predecessor. Although she is a shame for us Life Fibers, and the High Entity." he answers.

"High Entity?"

"The Entity that truly makes us Life Fibers, unlike your hybrid sister and my dearest Nui. Not to speak of Senketsu." he says and stands in front of Satsuki, waiting for an answer. She looks into his eyes. If you take a closer look, you can see single Life Fibers flow through it, but you really have to concentrate for that.

"You miss your servant?" he asks.

"You killed him. I'll make sure you regret it."

"Oh he won't be the last one. Now, I fear I have to go as your group will join soon. I'd love to talk more with you at some point and I will let you know when I do, but for now, I advise that you and your companions walk back to your little base with your legs. That's why you have them, right?"

"Why would we do that?" she asks. Ichiro smiles.

"I'll keep an eye on you. But honestly... that's up to you. I don't like rules either, but sometimes they are necessary for others. And that's a difference in my opinion." he smiles and liquifies into life fibers, crawling away with a high speed. The car explodes. Ryuko and Nui appear. They both raise their eyebrows, although Nui has to giggle.

"Ah come on, did the car just blew up?!" Ryuko asks Satsuki. The naked Samurai is still running away as Satsuki notices, since he is on the same street, but about 50 meters away. She looks back at Ryuko and Nui.

"Apparently." Satsuki says sarcastic.

"Gosh that looks funny, wanna do some BBQ?" Nui asks curious.

"So what are we going to do now?" Senketsu asks. Senketsu transforms back into his suit appearance.

"Let's steal a car!" Nui suggests and smiles. Ryuko shrugs about that, as they don't know where other Nudist Beach units are at the moment.

"We have to go on foot I assume." Satsuki says. Ryuko and Nui look at Satsuki confused.

"What?" Senketsu asks back.

"Ichiro was here. He told me that we should go on foot."

"And you seriously believe this guy?!" Ryuko asks annoyed. Nui intervenes.

"Hate to break your lil world, love, but when my sweet stupid Doppelgänger says he wants us to go on foot then he surely means it!" Nui reacts and smiles.

"Right, you're kidding." Ryuko answers back.

"Do I look like I'm kidding?" Nui grins. Ryuko looks at Nui in disbelief, and Senketsu looks shocked.

"Yeah. Yeah, you kinda do, if I have to be honest." Senketsu mumbles. Nui laughs.

"You'd be right normally, but NOW I am not kidding, trust me on that!" Nui insists and puts her weapon away.

"Ryuko, I'm afraid that Ichiro is serious, even though he looks like a joker." Satsuki mentions genuine. Ryuko shakes her head.

"Really... alright, you guys walk on foot, Imma take a car and get back alone and once I am back, I..."

"Ryuko, please." Satsuki intervenes. Ryuko sighs.

"Man, we really gotta go to foot?"

"Yes." Satsuki insists serious. Ryuko sighs.

"Look it this way, Ryuko, at least we can take our time and visit a few nice places." her sister tries to comfort while Nui laughs at the naked Samurai who watches them confused, pointing her fingers at him. Ryuko shakes her head.

"Come on, let's not waste our time and start." Satsuki says and starts walking up the street, with Nui following her closely and watching the Samurai curiously. Ryuko still can't really believe Satsuki is serious about this but she can't help. Whenever Satsuki decides something,

she truly believes in it and it's hard to convince her otherwise. And this Ichiro seems to really not joke around if you consider the fact that his goons apparently destroyed most of the COVERS headquarters already and that he killed Soroi. It certainly influences Satsuki's choice.

"Well, Ryuko, at least you got your sister and me. And a road trip sounds nice if you ask me." Senketsu grins - or so.

"I guess you're right." Ryuko answers and follows them.

And so, their journey from Tokyo back to Ôsaka begins...

AN: Hello again. :D Again, if you are interested in artworks for the story, simply send me a message by clicking onto my profile and then onto PM. Chapter 9 will be a two parter as it will probably a very huge one and I don't want you guys to read 20-30k words in one session, that's just too much. :D If you liked the chapter, leave me a review. I'd love to know what you think so far about the story, if the character interactions are believable and the battles fun to read. ^^ Part 1 of Chapter 9 "Across Japan, Pursued By Darkness" will come out next week! :) See ya! :D

Across Japan, Pursued By Darkness 1-3

Smoke rises up, and an explosion is audible. Battle sounds fall silent. A factory of Neo-REVOCS is being attacked by Nudist Beach - besides the soldiers, the Four Deva, all in their Nudist Beach uniforms, fight along. Sanageyama with a trusty Katana, Gamagoori with a huge Whip, Nonon with a Wakizashi, reminding a bit of the dual wielded Bakuzan, and Houka with a specially for him produced assault rifle with blue colors. As the last Ashigaru falls, the Nudist Beach units continue to loot the factory for useful items. To their surprise, there isn't as much life fibers as expected. Enough to produce clothes, but there is an extraordinary amount of conventional materials in this noble yet small factory. This kind of confuses the group, as they stand on an overpass, looking down to the stitching halls.

"Is it possible we've just had some bad luck?" Sanageyama asks the others confused. Nonon shrugs and Houka thinks.

"Well, it was a little factory. We couldn't expect much anyway." Gamagoori mentions.

"And yet it feels off. I want to know what they are doing." Houka says kind of annoyed.

"Well they're probably not stupid enough to produce these weird hovering suits again." Nonon thinks loudly. The others nod to that.

"Let's not lose time and help the others. Neo-REVOCS knows we are here. As much as these people deserve it, we should hurry up." Gamagoori suggests and jumps down to the looters. The others follow his orders.

Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui meanwhile arrive at the borders of Tokyo. The sun still shines, but probably for just about one or two more hours. At the very latest around 9 PM they should have found a

place to sleep. Ryuko took a box from one of the warehouses at the harbor to pack her scissor blades in a safe spot, as she certainly is not in the mood to carry them in her hands the entire time. The box is on her back as usual. Satsuki bought a map of Japan at a local store and takes it out, with the group taking a closer look at it, especially Senketsu.

"This is the plan: We'll take the way via the coast, as there are huge cities and a better chance on finding some proper hotels as well as restaurants. We won't lose orientation by that either. I know the route fairly well, so we shouldn't have huge problems. I suppose we arrive in Ôsaka in about ten days." Satsuki explains.

"You're kidding." Ryuko asks Satsuki. Nui giggles.

"Haha, I'm glad I can't walk then." Senketsu laughs.

"Keep your anger for something else. We have four more hours. If we are quick, we can get to Fujisawa today. Right now, we are at the borders of Yokosuka."

"Great..." Ryuko says annoyed. Satsuki starts walking all of a sudden, this surprises Ryuko. Nui follows Satsuki directly and shows Ryuko her tongue, then giggles and dances behind Satsuki. Ryuko shakes her head in disbelief.

"Come on, Ryuko, let's go." Senketsu suggests.

"You mean "I go" and you watch."

"Well, what should I say?" Senketsu grins. Ryuko smiles.

"It won't get boring at the very least, not with you, Satsuki and the weirdo." Ryuko answers.

"Weirdo? Hey, at least I'm not a turtle, like you!" Nui smiles.

"I'm on my way." Ryuko says and follows up.

And so, the group starts its journey back to Ōsaka. The path from Yokosuka to Fujisawa mainly consists of traveling on rooftops, watching the sun slowly going down. Yokosuka is built almost only out of buildings, and there are only three or four streets in the entire city. One to the city center, one to the highway, one to the harbor and one to the main part of Tokyo. It kind of feels like walking through slums, but for slums, they are modern and the mood is kind of comfortable. Most people know each other here. After all, they can simply walk on the rooftops, seeing their neighbours every day. Mostly young people live here.

After a while, they arrive Fujisawa, a rather small and boring place without anything too interesting. It's obvious they are getting closer to the city borders. The sun went down, and the first street lights turn on. It's getting colder though. Satsuki's suit keeps her warm, just like Senketsu for Ryuko, but even without Senketsu, Ryuko is by default a bit warmer thanks to her hybrid body, and Nui does not care. It could be -20° Celsius and she still could walk around without a problem, after all, her body is pretty cold already. A few snow flakes fall down. Senketsu watches them fascinated, since he never saw snow falling down in his entire life.

"Who would have thought this snow is so nice to watch?" he wonders.

"Yeah, it's pretty neat. Unless you need a car and have a crazy psychopath who threatens to fuck you up if you don't walk on foot." Ryuko answers sarcastic.

"Isn't the cold harming you, Ryuko? You were fully soaked hours ago." Satsuki mentions worried.

"Heh, nah, I'm alright. I'm a bit cold, but it's okay."

"Hehe, you and your "cold." Nui grins. Ryuko and Satsuki don't react. Nui starts whistling around, touching and "accidentally" destroying little things like glasses on their way, with Ryuko and Satsuki noticing it. She also throws a little stone at a car or makes some stupid

grimaces towards other civilians, although they don't see too many. It's funny to her after all. Around 8:30 PM, they finally arrive at a little hotel. Satsuki looks up the watch.

"Huh, looks good." she smiles satisfied.

"Cooleo." Ryuko answers. Nui walks straight into the Hotel, Satsuki and Ryuko follow her up closely. Inside the hotel, they notice that the building and interior isn't anything special, but that was to expect, since nothing interesting is here in the area. The food seems to be standard as well. After a short wordplay between Satsuki and the receptionist, the group gets two rooms. One for Ryuko and Satsuki and one for Nui alone. After all, sleeping next to Nui is probably not the most enjoyable thing, although Nui wouldn't mind. Their rooms are pretty boring and it's clear that Satsuki is disappointed by that, but sleeping room is sleeping room. The night begins, and the group sleeps...

...

Life fibers crawl up the old and sunken halls of the Honnouji-Academy and spread out furthermore. The waves slam at the walls. The parasitic aliens are everywhere now, but they are well hidden. Suddenly, on top of the Academy, life fibers seem to wave up, but slow and soft, until Ichiro appears. He wears a pink suit and yellow trousers, and of course both bow ties, one on the neck, the other one on his soft but slightly spiky hair. Ichiro leaves the peak of the academy, walking down to the lower parts. He seems to be excited, and the parts that were sunken once have no water left anymore - halls that were full of water are now approachable again. Life fibers fixed the holes, and seemingly enslaved or mind controlled humans removed the water inside. Ichiro arrives at a huge hall which was never used, not even during the times the Academy was active. This hall is below the main building and incredibly huge, and by taking the correct path inside the labyrinth like building you can get to it. Life fibers are at the walls and hum silent, but beautiful. Ichiro opens the gates to the hall. Pillars stand in the room, but other than that, there are only a few humans. It kind of reminds of the fiber palace years

ago below the Kiryuin Manor. Ichiro takes a closer look at the humans, marking some of them with a single fiber he puts on their body. The twelve humans that look at him are unable to move. They can feel everything, they can look around, but their bodies can't perform the tasks their brains want them to do. Ichiro then goes a few steps back and raises his hand, then closing it like a fist, as if he would crush something, and suddenly, every human who had the life fiber on their body seems to die. Their deaths are all equally brutal - the life fiber simply jumps in an eye blink through their head, as if someone just shot them with a sniper rifle. Their tongues are visible. The corpses fall onto the ground, and a gross sound is audible. The four humans that are left seem to eagerly wait for Ichiro's next move, while the life fibers on the ground suck the blood that leaves the corpses.

"Let's see if this technique works..." Ichiro mumbles curiously to himself and draws a few life fibers out of his fingers. These life fibers are carefully placed onto the arm of a young man.

At first, nothing seems to happen. But Ichiro is patient and waits eagerly, and after a few minutes, his idea, or technique seems to work. Curiously watching, disgusting and scary sounds are audible - painful, as if flesh would be teared apart, and a sound that reminds of acid burning through something. The man does not moan, but his pain is perfectly visible. Ichiro smiles, for his plan seems to work. Life fibers slowly move through his eyes in excitement.

"This will satisfy the High Entity." he says to himself impressed and leaves the room, while the life fibers that infested the gates close the door for him. More gross sounds can be heard behind the doors - whatever happens there, it can't be any good. But the life fibers feast on the weak, and Ichiro is certainly the strongest being they've ever had...

Day 1:

"Good morning!" Satsuki says grinning and knocks against Ryuko's door, who wakes up by that. Senketsu is already awake and looks at

the door. She yawns and stands up. It's 7.12 AM.

"Good morning, Ryuko." Senketsu says happy.

"Sup, Senketsu." Ryuko answers tired and quickly gets ready in the bathroom, then putting on Senketsu and leaving the room. She meets Nui in the halls who's hair is completely curly and disheveled. That's a view Ryuko likes to see, especially since Nui seems to be confused, looking at Ryuko calm and friendly, but clearly disorientated.

"Oh... good morning, Ryuko." Nui smiles.

"Yo, Harime. Looking really sharp today." Ryuko grins mean.

"Ohh... yeah... that happens a lot. You happen to have a comb?"

"If I had one, you wouldn't get it."

"Okay... well... did you slept well?" Nui asks worried. Ryuko raises her eye brows. Nui sounds different than usual.

"Eh... I had an nightmare, I suppose."

"I'm sorry to hear that, dear... I haven't had one. You'll be A-okay again."

"Uh, you good, Harime?"

"Hm? What do you mean?"

"I'm just saying. Look at you, you would have been annoying the moment you'd see me but you aren't, so uh..."

"Ahh... hmm... I just like you and Satsuki a lot." the psychopath says genuine and smiles innocent. Ryuko nods very slowly in disbelief.

"I hope you hate me as much as you can... I'd be the happiest... the... uh..." she mumbles and turns around. Suddenly, she stands

still, with her back facing Ryuko. Nui then makes her hair proper again and turns to Ryuko again with a huge smile.

"Heyyy, Ryuko! You look awesome today, did you fell from your bed?! I hope you did!" Nui laughs. Ryuko shakes her head annoyed.

"Quite an actor today, aren't we?" Ryuko asks.

"Actor?! Who!? I'm not acting! Everything I say is true, my love!" Nui grins. Ryuko nods, doubting Nui's words, then walking down to the little canteen of the hotel, where she meets up with her big sister, and briefly after with Nui. After a short breakfast, Satsuki buys some food and drinks in a little store nearby and three small bags for everyone. Then, the group starts traveling at 8:30 PM. The sun rises up slowly. A light snow bed is on the ground. Satsuki takes a look at the map to make sure they are still on track. Apparently, she did made a few marks and notes on certain points of the map. Seems like they travel mainly at the coast of Honshu, the japanese main island.

"Alright, I'll keep this short. I've made a few waypoints. Today, we should be able to get to Odawara, it's close to the national park "Fuji Hakone Izu." We can take the path via the national park for the next day. It's a shorter route and I'm sure it's interesting to walk around there. After that, we try to get to Fuji. There seems to be some sort of so called "Nanban" port... basically a port where you can buy certain goods from other parts of the world, like Europe. If we are taking such a long route, at least we can try to have some fun while doing so. Through Shizouka we can get to the city of Hamamatsu. There is a huge castle built back in the Sengoku-era, and a nice market at the moment, so maybe we can take a look around briefly. Eventually, we will arrive in Nagoya. Nui knows what Nagoya is. If you would explain it briefly, "Grand Couturier." Satsuki bids Nui.

"Nagoya is a great city, Ryuko! Lots of fun stuff, like clothing stores, more clothing stores, oh, and MORE clothing stores. Is it still the REVOCS-City?" Nui grins.

"Yes, it is."

"I saw that the route we take from Hamamatsu to Nagoya leads to my old high school, Masamune high. You... uh... you mind if we could check it out briefly? I... I just want to see how it developed and find out what my old... well... gang has become." Ryuko asks.

"Sure." Satsuki says calm. Ryuko nods.

"I suppose all of this will take about 6-7 days, if we always start walking at around 8 or 9 AM. I expect ten to eleven hours of walking each day. That's a lot, I know. But I'll make sure once we are home again, we'll get a break." Satsuki promises. Ryuko sighs annoyed, Nui seems to be happy like a little child.

"That sounds fun! Satsuki, can you walk that much?!" Nui asks with huge eyes and an even bigger smile.

"Yes, I can. I only need some food and something to drink." Satsuki answers calm. Nui nods happily and moves away from Satsuki. Satsuki takes a look at her bag - three bottles of water, some fresh fruits and noodles to deliver more energy, and a tasty chocolate bar. Everyone has the same stuff in the bag.

Eventually, the group starts walking. Their first waypoint is Odawara for today. Odawara is a rather quiet and chill city near the national park Fuji Hakone Izu, an immensely huge area with lakes, forests and beautiful mountains. The park is one of the few places in the Japan of 2030 that hasn't been filled with buildings everywhere. Nature is everywhere, and people live partially like that too. The group mainly continues walking on a huge street, with some cars slowly passing by. After three hours, they arrive in Hiratsuka. There aren't any huge and interesting buildings, but mainly some very little villages. The area is pretty much like a snow desert and boring. Despite the boring and slightly sad view, Senketsu still looks around curious. No wonder, he wants to see more of Japan and the world. Ryuko and Satsuki aren't exactly impressed, and Nui doesn't care at all. She's just happy to walk around and annoy her two "friends" which is more

difficult than expected, as Satsuki and Ryuko started to get used to it and simply react with a nod and smile, if Nui did something stupid again. It seems to work to an extent, as Nui now starts to be more creative, even if it takes up more time and therefore less chances of being an annoying person. But maybe this is all just an illusion and Nui is too smart, who knows? Since the path the group is walking on is pretty relaxing, and the fact that the three can walk rather quick leads to them arriving in Odawara at 5 PM and not, as expected, at 7 PM.

Odawara's entire landscape is very interesting, as it is, what it is - full of nature and free land. There are no skyscrapers, night clubs, attractions, nothing special to be short. It's one of the few cities in Japan that focus fully on silence and a good and warm feeling. People here partially embrace nature by not harming it - this goes so far that the people here apparently don't even want to remove the snow on the streets.

"They really forgot to remove the snow?! It's winter!" Ryuko says confused.

"Well that's Odawara for you." Satsuki mentions.

"Wow, it really is more boring here than I thought. I have a great plan, Ryuko, Satsuki, suit boy!"

"And that would be?" Senketsu asks.

"How about we KILL someone? Or steal something?! Or we KILL and STEAL something? Come on guys, it's gonna be fun, and if something goes wrong, well, only Satsuki can die, haha!"

"Sounds boring, honestly." Senketsu answers. Ryuko and Satsuki hear him out, curious about how he handles Nui.

"Why?" Nui asks confused.

"I got a better idea, scarface. How about we don't attack any of the people here and let them think we are just four simple visitors? They'll never believe it if they find out we are actually two life fibers, one hybrid and one human! That would sound too stupid, right?!"

"Uh... what?" Nui asks grinning.

"Ah, forget about it." Senketsu chuckles.

"You are not funny, Kamui, leave the fun to someone who has legs!" Nui grins.

"Ryuko? Next time you should cut off Nui's legs and not her arms." Senketsu then says to Ryuko, with Ryuko blinking to Nui. Nui looks shocked by that.

"You wouldn't do that, would you?" Nui asks shocked.

"Wanna find it out?"

"No, better not." she answers.

"Cooleo." Ryuko reacts uppish and continues walking. Nui pouts. On their way to the next hotel, the group gets themselves some snacks to eat for supper and then continue. It's especially interesting to see how kind and friendly the people are. It's a huge contrast to Tokyo or Ōsaka, and mostly people seem to be very athletic and sporty too. While walking through the streets they hear about sport games every once in a while that seem to happen in the national park. Football, tennis and various martial art games seem to happen there. According to the posters on the walls at the houses it's nothing big though, just little fun sport games without harming nature in any way. It's more about enjoying sports in an relaxed and beautiful environment, which makes the entire area of Fuji Hakone Izu much more interesting for sporty people.

The Hotel they visit is near the city borders, and a path that is connected to the Hotel leads to the heart of the park. But that is a

route they will take tomorrow. After such a long march, the group certainly deserves a comfortable bed, and Satsuki's legs hurt a little, if not too much, as pain is something she can endure - and really, legs that hurt a bit due to excessive walking is nothing compared to getting wounded during combat of course. But Satsuki thinks that after a long journey, the reward is more enjoyable, and that is the warm bed she can sleep in later. Senketsu chuckles the entire time though, as he doesn't have to walk of course. The Hotel itself is rather minimalistic and apart from a few workers there, everyone is in their rooms already. Pretty flowers are at the walls that emphasize the love of Odawara towards nature. All three get a key to an own room, and at 9 PM, after looking around a bit more in Odawara, they enter their rooms. While Nui stays in her room, talking with a clone and playing some little games with it, Ryuko and Senketsu sit on a terrace that gives a nice view to the path of Odawara to Fuji Hakone Izu. Satsuki is in her room as well.

"So you read Manga's and books, yes?" Senketsu asks curious. Ryuko nods.

"Mhm. Yeah, started that a while ago. One of two years, I think."

"Interesting. You ain't the kind of person that would read books if you ask me." Senketsu answers.

"Yup, I honestly haven't expected that either. I guess it's because Mako and I visited a library years ago. We wanted to take a look around and see what kind of stuff there is, and there was this one little Manga that sounded interesting, but I wasn't able to get it the other day. Few years ago I bought it then, but I still haven't finished it. It's pretty huge, you know?"

"I see. What's the name?"

"Nothing big. "Rivals", it is. It's basically about a heroine called "Justice" who fought years against a man called "Hayden." Hayden is that crazy man who wants to wreck chaos and shit, you know the deal, and Justice tries to keep him off doing that. But then, there is a

third person that doesn't have a name however who tries to destroy the entire world and seemingly has a problem with Justice and Hayden together, so the both Rivals decide to work together to defeat that third person. It's a huge Manga, the fanbase is rather short and it has it's flaws but it's still kinda fun to read, although I haven't continued yet."

"Why's that?"

"I... I kinda like Justice, but it's getting pretty dark towards the end and I'm not the kind of person that likes that shit. I prefer light action, you know, the stuff where you can enjoy visuals without thinking too much."

"Hm, cool. You gotta show me that one day."

"Sure. Well, this all happened briefly before our "date." Ryuko answers and chuckles briefly.

"Oh, I remember she said that. How was it?"

"It was great, until... until it got fucked up."

"What do you mean?"

"I... well... I don't wanna talk about it yet. Let's just say the date was the day where everything slowly broke apart. Not because we didn't like each other, we loved each other, but this... sickness, it... it showed itself back then for the first time and it scared Mako almost to death. We both still loved each other, but we realized after that, that we may should just stay best friends. *sigh*"

"I'm sorry to hear that, Ryuko."

"It's okay, Senketsu. It's nice to have someone you can talk with."

"What about Satsuki?"

"I can't tell that Satsuki. Satsuki struggles with relationships herself and I don't want to make her lose hope in finding a friend someday by telling her how this sickness fucked everything up." Ryuko answers.

"That's understandable. It wasn't my intention to offend you or get too close, I'm... just curious since it has been some time."

"Hey, it's cool, Senketsu. It's not too close. I mean, you see me naked every day." Ryuko grins and blushes.

"That makes me a very lucky person." Senketsu laughs evil. Ryuko laughs and hits his missing eye, making him laugh even more.

"Asshole." Ryuko smiles.

"Are they all into clothes still?" Senketsu then gets serious again and asks.

"Mhm, most people aren't, thank god, but thanks to this Life fiber sickness, said life fibers are still pretty "in." I gotta say though that I am confused as to why you look so different. Why would someone tailor you different?"

"I don't know, honestly. All I know that it was not Isshin who tailored me this time. Whoever did that had a plan though. You think our psychopathic members knows more? Or her weird Doppelgänger? Or maybe I am a second version indeed and you never found me? Hmm..."

"I don't know..."

"In any case, we'll find it out. So, you and Mako had a good time though, at least for a while?" Senketsu asks.

"Yeah. The best time in my life."

"I bet you'll experience a good time like that again."

"I hope so."

The night starts, and both friends decide to go to bed. Ryuko hangs Senketsu on a wall who starts to sleep soon after. Ryuko is tired anyways from all the walking, and Satsuki is probably even more tired. The last lights go out...

Day 2:

"Harime."

"High Entity." Ichiro smiles and looks up to the High Entity, sitting on it's life fiber throne. Life fibers crawl up the walls and hum slowly and beautiful. It still sounds weirdly wonderful on it's own, but yet somehow disturbing. So many beings that want to kill and devour other worlds, yet all of them work together to become stronger.

"Stand up." the High Entity says in many different voices - high and low pitches you could assign to several genders and things no one on earth ever saw.

"Matoi, Kiryuin and Harime found each other and work together, however, there is a clear dissonance visible. Harime will annoy them and confuse them, I assume." Ichiro explains calm. The Entity watches him. With it's red-orange-ish, disturbing round eyes that can't express emotions, it looks down at him, and it's mouth is formed by several life fibers that spread across the entire cheek like part of the face. The Entity still shines brightly and the "skin" is completely white, yet some life fibers are visible here and there, some very small, some bigger, giving a red little shimmer inside the body. It appears human like, yet not enough to actually say it is a humanoid being. Maybe the Entity looked different once? Or better, all Entities, as this thing consists of several personalities.

"Everything your chosen being, Ragyo Kiryuin, is gone. All that is left is the corporation she had. As you know, it is under my control. The powers you gave me seem to work perfectly fine." Ichiro smiles satisfied. Five copies of the Entity appear out of the walls in the

throne room, walking slowly around him, but precise, and they all watch him.

"Then you are one step closer on fulfilling your main ambition. Well done. Collect the humans. Give them hope. Then break them. Purge their bodies and make them ours, for they took what was ours, and so, they shall become part of us."

"The humans use so called "factories" to produce certain goods. I will use them to my advantage - for that, I have a suggestion." he explains. The main Entity on the throne and the five Entities in front of him watch him. Life fibers crawl through their eyes and bodies.

"A similar process like Ragyo Kiryuin. Convincing people with clothes, yet it shall not be a sin, as she said. It shall carve a path to purification. And the factories will purify them completely." he explains cryptically. The Entities nod interested.

"I'll let you know once the Honnouji-Academy is ready for your arrival. It shouldn't take too long." he ends his short comment. The Entities copies perform a semi circle. The High Entity on the throne looks down at him and the other Entities.

"Use your power, for you are our enforcer." the first Entity on his far left says.

"Use your superior structures, for you are our child. the second entity, between the central entity and the far left one, says.

"Use your voice to convince humanity, for you are our purificator." the Entity on the far right says.

"Use you armies, for you are their leader." the Entity between the far right and the central one says.

"Use your corporation... for clothing is the original sin." the Entity in the center says. Harimes smiles.

"Go, Ichiro Harime, first child of the life fibers, enforcer of your species. Fulfill your ambition." the High Entity says. Ichiro dissolves into life fibers and disappears. The Entities copies turn around to the High Entity and slowly dissolve into white fibers...

...

Satsuki wakes up and yawns. She looks pretty bad thanks to the usual nightmare. After a quick shower she puts on her noble suit and then leaves her room, walking to the terrace. The sun slowly rises. It's 8:40 AM. The path to Fuji Hakone Izu is well visible.

"Completely different than Tokyo or Ôsaka." Satsuki thinks in her head. Then, she hears footsteps and turns around. It's her mother Ragyo.

"It's a shame to see what you have become, child." Ragyo says to Satsuki. Satsuki looks at Ragyo evil and serious, yet she still keeps in her mind that Ragyo is just a hallucination.

"Seek me whenever you want, in the end, you will fail after all." Satsuki reacts. The Ragyo hallucination walks to the end of the terrace, leaning onto the fence to look around briefly.

"Look around. Where did your ambitions led to. You've stopped me, no, the life fibers, but only temporarily. I've told it to your sister once... we would come back. And this is what happened. Now, all that is left of this once so strong and proud woman is an empty shell... a woman, who asks herself every day why humanity is ungrateful, why humanity treats her like the worthless being she is... and the worst... a woman who lost it's strength for a "normal" life. There is no such thing as a normal life. Not for you. Not for Ryuko. Not for Nui."

"Life fibers are parasites. I do not regret my ambitions and deeds, even if the entire world hates me. If this is the sacrifice I have to offer to save humanity, so be it. You may be right. Maybe, there is no normal life. At least not for me and Harime. Your deeds and ideals

made my life the way it is now - a life dedicated to hate and wrath, and a battle that will never end. You destroyed Ryuko's life by throwing her away. And you corrupted an... "individual..." into an psychopathic being." Satsuki answers to that. Ragyo turns her head to Satsuki and smiles.

"Who are you talking with?" Nui smiles confused. Satsuki turns around.

"I..." Satsuki mumbles and looks back. Ragyo is gone.

"... just talked with an hallucination."

"Sounds funny. Kinda like talking with yourself."

"Pretty much." Satsuki answers. Nui chuckles about that.

"Don't worry, I talk with myself every day, sweetheart! Trust me, it's normal, and at some point, we all get weird!"

"I can see that." Satsuki answers and looks at Nui.

"Uh, not one hour awake and already annoyed, that was easy today."

"I'm not annoyed. I tolerate your existence due to the circumstances, that is all."

"How kind of you!" Nui answers happy. Satsuki briefly thinks. Nui stretches her arms and jumps onto a chair.

"You won't do any trouble when we enter Nagoya, is that clear?" Satsuki orders. Nui rolls her eyes.

"But Nagoya is great!"

"Yes, but it has "emotional" value for you, which is why I expect you to not harm anyone or cause any trouble."

"I never cause trouble. And if I do, there is a reason for that." Nui answers smiling.

"Of course, how could I forget that?" Satsuki asks in distrust. After Ryuko wakes up, the group breakfasts briefly in a little garden next to the hotel and then start their journey to Fuji Hakone Izu.

The path to Fuji Hakone Izu starts directly at the hotel. The group takes a little stone path on a huge, with snow covered meadow and arrive a few minutes later in a little snowy, but idyllic forest, that is quiet and enjoyable to look at. It's 9:20 AM. The trees rustle a bit, but it's a comfortable rustling. There is no snowfall today. Ryuko, Satsuki, Senketsu and even Nui look around curious. None of the four have ever seen such an beautiful environment. The forest leads deeper into a little canyon, and snow hangs on the cliffs to their left and right. There is also a little water pond. The pond is filled up by water that leaves two little holes on the cliff. The water flows softly and quiet. Then, Senketsu notices something on Ryuko's right side.

"Look, Ryuko, to your right." Senketsu says curious. Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui look to their right side where Senketsu looked at. Nui smiles curiously.

"A rabbit." Satsuki mumbles interested. The little rabbit slowly hops around the group, watching them. He seems to be very calm and trustful towards humans, which is pretty unusual, as rabbits are usually shy. This certainly is another sign of how well the people treat nature here. The rabbit hops towards Satsuki's feet and look up at her. Satsuki smiles slightly. Then, the rabbit hops to Ryuko. Ryuko carefully sits down and pets the little rabbit's head. After that, Ryuko moves her hand into the sleeve and let's Senketsu pet it with his sleeve.

"He feels soft." Senketsu says happy. That's how a rabbit feels, apparently. The rabbit seems to like them and shortly hops onto Ryuko's feet, sitting there for a few seconds, then jumping off and hopping to Nui. Ryuko and Satsuki carefully watch Nui. The rabbit looks up to Nui, and Nui leans down to the rabbit.

"Look how cute you are." Nui mumbles grinning. Then she boops the snoot carefully. The rabbit raises it's ears and blinks. Following up, the rabbit hops around Nui's legs and then away from the group, looking back at them one last time. The rabbit disappears behind a bush then. Everyone smiles and continues walking. The next hours pass quiet and comfortable, no one talks much, as everyone simply just enjoys the environment and the nice feeling. After two hours, the group arrives in another huge forest and leaves the canyon, finding some signs about the national park. If they group continues walking forward, they should arrive in a little town not far from here, maybe an hour away. Satsuki decides to take the route via the town. The following hour is chill and quiet. Ryuko and Senketsu talk a little bit, telling jokes to each other, while Satsuki and Nui are rather quiet, although Nui sometimes annoys Satsuki a bit by playing with her hair for example. If Mako would be here, she would be completely crazy about the local rabbit population here, since she likes rabbits. Maybe sometime else. The little town is in a valley that is very close to the Lake Ashinoko. A beautiful, huge lake, just like everything else is beautiful here.

"This truly is the only place in Japan that is aesthetically a masterpiece." Satsuki judges about the environment. She notices quickly the little sport fields. To get to Numazu, the group takes the path through the city and finally out of the national park, as this way is a bit shorter and more enjoyable to walk through. Passing by a sports field, Satsuki hear's a well known voice.

"I can't believe it." she says and suddenly walks quickly to the sports field. Ryuko notices the voice as well, and then a second one.

"Oh no." she mumbles.

"Oh yes." Senketsu mumbles back.

"Why are we whispering?" Nui whispers grinning. Ryuko follows Satsuki. Nui shortly runs to Ryuko. A tennis ball flies into the air. Satsuki opens the gate that leads to the tennis field.

"You moron! This is the SIXTH ball you shot out of the field already! How can you be so stupid?!"

"Omiko Hakodate and Takharu Fukuroda!" Satsuki says serious but with a smile. Both contrahents stay still immediately and look surprised to Satsuki.

"Lady Satsuki!?" Hakodate and Fukuroda say amazed. They both changed a bit - Fukuroda grew a bit and became a bit more muscular, and Hakodate cut her hair short. She also does not have a binocular on her eye anymore, after all, it was part of her Goku-Uniform.

"I should have known I would meet both of you here in Fuji Hakone Izu." Satsuki says excited.

"It is said you are dead, Lady Satsuki! How is this possible?" Fukuroda asks confused. Ryuko appears. Fukuroda and Hakodate notice her.

"Matoi, right?"

"Ryuko has nerve-wracking ideas, but they work." Satsuki answers. Hakodate grins evil.

"What brings you to Fuji Hakone Izu?" he asks.

"We're just passing by." Satsuki answers calm.

"Who is the wannabe-CEO talking with?" Nui asks curious and appears next to Ryuko. The both rivals notice Nui and raise their eyebrows.

"Uh..."

"Uhm..."

"Long story." Satsuki reacts cool. Both nod slowly.

"You want something to eat or drink? Hakodate and I welcome you with great fear." the little man asks. Satsuki shakes her head.

"Thanks, but we don't need anything. Besides... I changed, Fukuroda. Don't worry. However, are there little shortcuts that lead out of the national park?" Satsuki asks curious.

"Shortcuts? Not really, but we got free bicycles. Car's aren't allowed here after all, except for transport." he answers.

"Or you'll take the gondola systems, you're far quicker with these. Walking the entire way through the park might be neat, but you look like you gotta be away quick." Hakodate mentions and closes her arms. Then she sees Nui throwing around tennis balls, and Ryuko trying to stop her.

"The fuck..." Hakodate mumbles quiet to herself.

"We prefer on foot, to be honest." Satsuki smiles.

"For real?" Hakodate reacts surprised.

"It's complicated." Satsuki answers. Hakodate notices Satsuki's Katana and Fukuroda the box on Ryuko's back.

"Seems like you guys wanna mix up Japan and Neo-REVOCS, hm?" Fukuroda asks cheeky.

"Yes... that's the reason why we go on foot. Neo-REVOCS' CEO is a mischievous bastard. Harime told me if he says something, then he means it, and an open battle is something we cannot afford - besides, it would endanger everyone."

"Yeah that's how the CEO looks like anyway." Hakodate answers to that.

"Well in that case, there are some little canyons and secret paths at the lake you could take. You surely are faster that way. You got a

map?" he asks. Satsuki nods and takes it out of her bag. Hakodate gives Fukuroda a pen who makes a few crosses here and there.

"I know Fuji Hakone Izu like my non existent wallet. If you can get up the cliffs, you should be at Numazu at 7 PM." Fukuroda explains briefly. Satsuki nods grateful.

"Thank you." she says.

"No problem, Lady Satsuki." Fukuroda says.

"You too. Visit us once, but please prepare us. Fuji Hakone Izu is amazing during summer." the tennis player suggests grinning.

"I'll keep it in mind. Good bye, and thank you." Satsuki says and collects Ryuko and Nui. Then, the group leaves the field.

"Now, what was I going to say? Oh yeah, right... you are one of the worst tennis players I've ever saw..." Hakodate mocks Fukuroda. Senketsu chuckles about that. The group continues walking through the city and eventually arrives at the lake. After a short visit at a local market to get some fresh and tasty food, they decide to get to the cliffs two kilometres away from them. Ryuko takes out a little jukebox she bought at the market and stops briefly to turn it on, while Satsuki and Nui continue. Music starts.

"Now come on, Ryuko." Satsuki says serious as she notices Ryuko stands still. She looks back at the lake quickly to keep the view in her mind.

"Listen to the big sister, Ryuko, you don't want her to get evil!" Nui chuckles and shows her tongue. Ryuko then continues walking to them who wait on the path. It's still a good path left to Numazu, but the view is great, so that's a plus.

"I'm already there." Ryuko says and joins with Satsuki and Nui.

"I love you fools, you know? This is gonna be such a fun journey!"
Nui laughs happily and continues walking with them.

Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui walk on a stone path, between the lake and the cliffs of Fuji Hakone Izu. From here, the mountains of the national park are visible, covered by snow. It's colder than usual, but that's okay. After half an hour, they arrive at a little path that leads up to the cliffs, and as they arrive at the top, they find themselves back on a huge meadow with little hills and trees here and there. As they walk through the beautiful meadows, they find a pagoda, and a buddhistic monk who seems to work there a bit. The group watches the monk, and as he notices them, he greets them by bowing down shortly. Ryuko and Satsuki smile and Nui waves her hand towards him. Arriving at the other side of the huge plains, they take a stair like path down. The path leads down into a dense forest, and so, they were able to save one hour of time. It's 3 PM now. While walking through the huge forest, they pass by an old castle - the ruins of the Yamanaka-castle. It was an important location back in the Sengoku-era, where the Ashigaru come from. It belonged to the Hojo-Clan, a huge warrior clan back then. Satsuki remembers that there is a castle in Hamamatsu as well and that it's probably exciting to take a look at. She doesn't show it, but in truth she can't really wait for it to take a look at it with her own eyes. At least she see's some good stuff in Ichiro's threat.

The path leads down. The evening slowly arrives, and the group arrives in civilization again. They arrived in Numazu. Numazu is rather old and not too modern. It reminds of old japanes architecture, but there are some modern elements like power of course. Simple said, it's as if they would have travelled into the past a little bit, as the buildings remind of 16th century architecture. In the background, it seems to get even more interesting - in Fuji, the buildings look absolutely different than the one's here in Numazu. Pretty untypical for Japan. Is that the Nanban port Satsuki spoke of the other day? They will certainly find out tomorrow. The group visits a Hotel in the inner city. Satsuki pays the room costs and after a mediocre, but still tasty supper, the evening arrives already. There are TVs in the hotel

rooms which Ryuko and Satsuki take as an occasion to let the day end in Satsuki's room. While Senketsu curiously watches the TV shows, Ryuko and Satsuki talk with each other. Satsuki relaxes on her comfortable bed, Ryuko sits on some comfortable cushions.

"You'd be a liar if you say that this day was boring though, be honest!" Satsuki says smiling.

"Yeah, it was kinda neat, not gonna lie." Ryuko answers.

"Well, I liked it! I got to pet a rabbit, hehe." Senketsu chuckles. Ryuko chuckles too and yawns. She feels dizzy and has a little headache, which is a bit unusual, as she normally doesn't have that. The headache disappears after a few minutes though. It seems like something bothers Satsuki, as Ryuko notices.

"You good, Satsuki?" Ryuko asks worried.

"Yeah. I'm alright. I was just thinking for a bit." she answers.

"About what?"

"This morning, Ragyo appeared again. She talked about how I lost my strength, or my confidence, so to speak. It's not the first time she say's that. I sometimes ask myself if she is right about that or not. She said that our lives are destined to never be normal. Your's. Mine. And yes... even Harime's."

"Fuck Harime. And fuck Ragyo, if you ask me. It was a hallucination. I might be stronger than you but you've always been the one who was able to command entire armies, not me."

"I mean in general. I have this huge corporation to lead. I never got to finish school properly and now I'm here. I need to be honest. When I said I wanted to sell REVOCS, I did that in order to avoid this... responsibility that rests on my shoulders. Kind of stupid if you think about it. I'm able to lead a school full of loyal students, but I can't lead a worldwide organization."

"You think so?" Ryuko asks.

"Mhm."

"Senketsu?" Ryuko mentions. He hesitates at first.

"The way I learned to know you, Satsuki, is that you always stood up whenever a plan went wrong. I think I can speak for Ryuko too if I say that we both are on your side and that you are better than you think you are. A "school" is nothing compared to a world wide corporation that tried to enslave the world once. Well, that's what I think at least."

"Maybe. But let's be honest. Ragyo is right at some point, isn't she? My life was dedicated to you, Ryuko. Your life was thrown away like trash. And..."

"Yes?"

"... I was done. Apologies." Satsuki says and clears her throat.

"Yeah, could be. So? I'll stay with my opinion. Fuck Ragyo. I guess she didn't learnt it different either. I bet she was raised to be like the monster she was, and all she did was to apply that now with you. But thankfully it didn't worked on you. Well, I mean, you are an asshole to others sometimes, but you have a reason to be, I guess." Ryuko smiles. Satsuki nods.

"Is that why you forgave her back then?" Satsuki asks.

"Kind of. I'm very bad at forgiving, but yeah, it kind of was like that, yeah. Ragyo fucked up so much, not just personally towards me of course. But I wanted to give her a chance because... well... it felt right, you know? I... wanted to be better than her. I wanted to let off the past and... try to be an adult, but that didn't worked really well, did it?" Ryuko asks, joking about herself.

"Mh. Yeah, you may be childish sometimes, but that's okay for me."
Satsuki answers smiling. Ryuko looks at Satsuki.

"I know you hear that a lot from me and I'm sorry, but... yeah... you are stronger than me. Unlike me, you can forgive. I can't."

"Don't say that, Satsuki. First of all, I'm not good at forgiving, and secondly, you can forgive too. I mean, you can apologize already for using me and everyone else as a tool." Ryuko smiles. Satsuki nods.

"Heads up, Satsuki. When we kick Ichiro's and Nui's ass, you'll lead the best fucking company on earth. I know you can." Ryuko smiles. Satsuki looks at Ryuko and thinks briefly.

"Thanks, Ryuko. I hope I will."

"I bet you will." Ryuko smiles...

Eventually, Ryuko and Satsuki continue watching a bit more, and after half an hour, they go to bed and sleep.

...

...

...

"Chosen by the life fibers..."

"BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELF!"

"Destined to great..."

"YOU ARE A FAILURE!"

"Chosen by the Entity..."

"YOU ARE WEAK!"

"To fulfill their will..."

"HOW CAN YOU CALL YOURSELF THE STRONGEST OF US?"

"And to purge the weaklings..."

...

...

...

"That is my purpose."

...

...

...

"... I did everything you want. Everything Lady Ragyo wanted!" Nui begs scared.

"And yet you stand here." the Entity says to Nui.

"... please..."

"Your failure cannot be excused. You will be purged, and a new Harime will take it's righteous place. And it will overcome your shadow to become the greatest being. Be ashamed, for you are a mere human in the body of a life fiber, capable of emotions, yet pressuring them away."

"I'm not..." Nui mumbles scared.

"Leave this holy place, for you are no life fiber, just a mere shell, raised by a human." the Entity says and dissolves Nui from it's throne room. For a brief moment, everything is completely silent and dark.

Then, after a few seconds, Nui opens her eyes. Her human body is completely gone - only her life fiber body is left. A red and orange mixture, with life fibers crawling through every part of the skin, and red-orange eyes, just like the Entity and every other life fiber that formed an own body... this is Nui's true form. And as she see's where she landed, the life fibers stopped moving for a brief second. Her face is unable to of showing emotions. Yet she falls on the ground and looks down, seeing single life fibers disappearing in it. All she can hear is the life fibers that briefly after continue moving in her body.

As she looks up, a single white life fiber is in front of her, thousands of miles away. So close, yet so far away.

"... no..."

A single, white life fiber...

So close...

Yet so far away...

...

...

...

To be continued.

AN: What do you think about the ending? Let me know in the reviews should you choose to write one! :D Thanks for reading and see ya next week, when Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui visit the Nanban port of Fuji, the castle of Hamamatsu and Ryuko's old school! :)

Across Japan, Pursued By Darkness 2-3

AN: Welcome back to a new part of Chapter 9. There's one more part to chapter 9 and then we arrive in chapter 10. Out of 30. Yes, exactly. This story has thirty chapters. :D Please let me know if the chapters have a good length and aren't too long. Oh, btw, did you saw the new story cover already? I drew that. I figured I'll replace the cover with every new chapter now. ^^ Anyway, have fun reading now!

"Access denied."

"*sigh... shit..."

"Access denied."

"... can't believe this." Houka mumbles annoyed. It's 11:30 PM. Nonon enters the command room. She and Houka are the only ones in the room.

"Still working?" Nonon asks curiously and leans to Houka. Command lines are everywhere.

"Neo-REVOCS can be hacked, I know that. I've managed it once, I can do it again. I could control every factory, I knew their plans, I could control the Ashigaru..." he mumbles and sighs.

"Yeah, but only if you are awake, and you are not."

"... yes. But you are like that too. Your first concert was catastrophic, and I remember how you talked with Uzu and me back then. The entire night, might I add. You felt bad."

"Mhm. Kind of ate me up inside. You're not sitting here just because you wanna kick Neo-REVOCS ass. You do this for Satsuki too, huh?" she asks and sits down.

"I... yes. Without Satsuki, I'd be a nobody. I feel like I owe this to her. Helping her, I mean. She wants her company back."

"We all want that. Ira, Uzu, me..." Nonon answers. Houka nods slowly.

"Inu, you're the smartest nerd I know but you gotta take care of yourself. Data won't bring you anything if you are tired. I'm sure there is a way to hack the facility, but maybe we should really just send someone to their HQ like you suggested. Maybe upload a virus or something, I don't know. Come on, buddy." Nonon says and slowly closes the Laptop. Houka seems a bit disappointed.

"You haven't rested for a single hour since Satsuki didn't came back. She's fine, I'm sure of it." Nonon smiles. Houka nods. Nonon gives Houka his Laptop and pats his shoulders.

"Go to bed, Inu."

"How'd you know I'm awake?" he asks curious.

"Your room light was on, but I haven't heard you typing. And really... we are friends, Inu. I gotta know when I can annoy you." Nonon grins. Houka chuckles.

"Indeed." he answers smiling. Houka and Nonon leave the room and wish each other a good night. As Houka sits down on his bed, he thinks briefly.

"Maybe a virus is indeed the solution..."

Day 3:

"WAKEY WAKEY!" Nui screams and kicks open Satsuki's door, who falls from the bed scared. She looks annoyed as she watches Nui grinning towards her.

"You do this one more time and you get a problem." Satsuki threatens. Nui laughs.

"Aw, Satsuki my dear, I'm sorry, I just want you to wake up!" Nui smiles.

"Stop screaming you maniac!" someone in another room yells at Nui. Then, Ryuko leaves her room with a Pyjama, walking to Nui and trying to punch her in the face, but Nui dodges.

"Missed." she grins and shows her tongue.

"Shut up." Ryuko answers and pushes Nui away. Satsuki looks at the watch. 8:43 AM. Well, at least it was good that Nui woke her up. Satsuki puts on her suit and takes a look at Fuji. She smiles slightly in excitement.

The group walks through the streets of Numazu. You could think you'd landed in the old Japan. Everything here looks old. There is a nice little garden to their right, but other than that, just a museum and that's it. It's getting more interesting as the group arrives in Fuji three hours later. Satsuki is amazed while Ryuko is rather confused and Nui just smiles like always.

"Well THAT's a culture shock!" Satsuki says happy. Fuji is completely crazy - houses built in various different architectures. European, american, spanish, indian... Ryuko simply asks herself where they just landed.

"Where the hell are we!?" Ryuko asks her sister confused.

"There are a lot of goods from various parts of the world. Especially Europe! Come on!" Satsuki says.

"So?" Nui smiles.

"Ah fuck, I know what she's thinking about."

"European tea!" Satsuki grins and walks quickly into the city. Ryuko never saw Satsuki that euphoric, at least not when it comes to tea.

Ryuko and Nui look at each other and shrug their shoulders, then they follow Satsuki, although Nui walks rather relaxed.

No matter where you look at - various amazing and interesting booths stand around from all sorts of countries in the world. Expensive spices from the orient and wonderful silk and cloths greet Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui. Nui curiously takes a look at the silk.

"Good day, honorable young woman! Can I amaze you for our beautiful silk?" a vendor asks. Nui nods curious. Ryuko follows Satsuki. After the orientalic booths, Ryuko finds some vendors from South and north america. They mostly sell good looking and tasty food and little cool figures. Senketsu takes a look at the little sculptures.

"Damn, the food smells good." Ryuko notices. Satsuki doesn't care and walks to the harbor.

"Arepas! Who wants Arepas!?" a young woman asks. Ryuko looks at the food. Looks good.

"Try it out!" the woman says in a rather unsecure english, but Ryuko accepts the offer and tries one of the corn cake like snacks. Ryuko nods satisfied.

"That's really neat." she says smiling and notices Nui coming to her with a backpack full of silk. Ryuko is impressed.

"The fuck did you do?!" Ryuko asks wondered.

"THAT is material I can work with. Not cotton or polyester! It's not Life Fibers, buuuuut it's still good!" Nui reacts happily and downsizes the bag with Life Fibers - however that works. The people don't even notice that as everyone is too busy and there are simply too many people.

"And how'd you pay that?"

"I didn't." Nui smiles.

"Should have figured." Ryuko reacts. They both continue walking to the harbor. Arriving at it, they see some sellers and even an fortune teller. There is also an old portuguese ship, it reminds of a galleon. Civilians are on the ship. At the harbor, there is mostly european goods like cloths or, most importantly, tea. Lots. Of. Tea.

"Of course." Senketsu chuckles. Ryuko and Nui go down the harbor and find Satsuki sipping some tea on a terrace, enjoying the nice view. She doesn't even notice both companions sitting down next to her. She sips satisfied some more tea.

"Ahh... Soroi, now I understand what you meant with this formidable european tea." Satsuki says to herself pleased. Nui and Senketsu chuckle slightly, Ryuko rolls her eyes and smiles. A little fish cutter arrives in the harbor. A waiter appears, bringing Satsuki more tea.

"Your tea. Do your companions wish for some tea as well?" the waiter asks polite. Satsuki turns around and see's Ryuko and Nui. She grins and blushes briefly.

"Hi." Ryuko grins.

"Hello." Satsuki answers blushing. The waiter still expects an answer.

"Oh, yes, of course, my companions want tea as well, correct? Of course you would." she smiles.

"Hey, I didn't..."

"Specialty of the house please, two times." she orders. The waiter leaves.

"As if you just ordered tea for me and this weirdo."

"The tea is great."

"But I..."

"The. Tea. Is. Great!"

"Maybe, but..." Ryuko grins.

"You get a tea now! It's fantastic!" Satsuki chuckles.

"Alright, alright, I believe you." Ryuko laughs. A lot is going on here at the harbor - people load wares onto ships, visit the galleon or buy stuff. It would probably take hours to see all of Fuji...

...

Around the same time, Masaru works in his office, working on the security systems of Neo-REVOCS and improving the combat efficiency of the robotic-like Ashigaru soldiers. A Samurai enters the office.

"Master Yamamoto, our units have been upgraded and use Anti-Life fiber ammo to combat Matoi and Harime more efficient. Any more orders?"

"There's no need to call me master." Masaru answers slightly ashamed.

"Apologies."

"All good. Uh, no, get back to your post, I gotta talk with the CEO." Masaru then continues, with the Samurai leaving the room. Entering the presidential office, Ichiro laid his legs onto the desk, reading a book called "Cooking Fish 101." Masaru can't see his face due to the book held up by him.

"Master Ichiro." Masaru reacts calm. Ichiro lowers the book just enough so Masaru can see his eyes and hair.

"Nudist Beach tried to hack us this night again, but I've defended the system. The Ashigaru now use the new ammo, as you ordered."

Ichiro doesn't react.

"Apart from that, the patrols haven't spotted our targets yet. Why did we even let them run?" Masaru asks confused. Ichiro still doesn't react. This is kind of uncomfortable.

"Oh... we also sent more goods to Honnouji. Why exactly Honnouji, if I may ask?"

Ichiro lowers his book.

"Recycling, Masaru. Why waste resources? They could be useful for the academy."

"But what kind of resources?"

"You'll see. I want to rebuilt the academy. Does that answer your question?"

"I think it does."

"Good. Regarding your worries about the three targets... I don't know, honestly." Ichiro smiles and claps with his hands once.

"Maybe I was just in a good mood? I know that Matoi wants to visit her old school. Chasing her with dozens of units wouldn't be right, if you ask me." Ichiro explains and leans back onto his chair.

"Well... we could intercept them before they arrive."

"Masaru, you truly are a genius and a monster, who would have thought that?"

"I'm not innocent. I did enough bad stuff too. But if it's for a good cause and if the destruction of Nudist Beach and the resistance leads humanity to a better future without this stupid sickness, sacrifices are needed, I suppose, even though I do feel bad somehow."

"Of course you do. Don't worry. Once this is over, we don't need Ashigaru, Samurai and these "Shinobi" anymore. Look, we Life Fibers did a lot of bad stuff and we paid for that, but even we can change. We just want a home as well. After all, there aren't many of us left."

"There aren't?"

"No. Not many." Ichiro answers calm and clears his throat.

"I see. Well, I'll get to work again. Can I send out some units?"

"I'll do that in a minute." Ichiro reacts and orders a certain unit into the presidential room. He stands up and looks outside the windows, down to Tokyo. The door opens, and slight, clear steps are visible.

"Yes, Ichiro?" a female voice says.

"Couturier. Order several Ashigaru and Samurai units to follow Matoi, Kiryuin and Harime, they are at Fuji right now. Keep distance. Once they arrive at Matoi's school, destroy the school and kill everyone there is, then retreat. It's not a broken rule if we don't attack Matoi herself, after all." Ichiro chuckles. The Couturier chuckles as well.

"As you wish..."

...

"We take three more!" Ryuko yells at the waiter. The waiter nods scared as he watches the table. 21 cups of tea stand there, all properly stapled. The cups aren't big, but it still is an impressive view. Senketsu looks worried at Ryuko and Satsuki. Satsuki grins mischievous at her both companions and sips like Ryuko, and Nui slurps.

"MMMHM! Satsuki, my dear, you should become a professional tea drinker!" Nui grins.

"Look who's talking." Satsuki chuckles.

"You guys scare me." Senketsu smiles. New tea arrives, which the tree drink quickly. Civilians watch them worried.

"Told y'all the tea is great." Satsuki mentions and leans back.

"You got some space in your bag left, Satsuki?" Ryuko asks.

"Yes. Why?"

"We'll buy the entire booth."

"Hahaha!"

"Buy the booth!? Pff, right. Watch this, darling." Nui says and stands up. Both sisters watch Nui walking to the vendor.

"Hey, aren't you part of the group that drank 24 cups of tea already?!"

"Yeah, I do. We love your tea, it's AWESOME, I'd kill for it, if you get what I mean."

"I hear that a lot actually, thanks." he smiles. Nui nods and smiles mischevious. She puts her hand behind her back.

"I bet you do! Question. How much for the entire stock?"

"THE ENTIRE STOCK!? ARE YOU JOKING?"

"Do I look like I'm joking?" Nui smiles and chuckles.

"Well, uhm..." he tries to answer and starts thinking. Nui blinks towards her two companions and then takes out a clone behind her back, letting it fall down without anyone noticing it. The clone rolls behind the booth and turns big, looking at all sorts of tasty tea.

"... hmm, a crate costs 12000 Yen and I have three at the moment, eight are in the ware house and twelve should arrive later on..." he

mumbles, while Nui whistles. Ryuko, Satsuki and Senketsu watch closely.

"You gotta admit that this is hilarious. I'll pay the man anyway." Satsuki mentions.

"Eh... yeah, maybe. She's still a psychopath and a bitch." Ryuko answers annoyed. Satsuki shrugs.

"I think it's funny." Senketsu chuckles. Satsuki nods towards Senketsu.

"So you want 120.000 Yen for ten of your awful tasty tea crates, yes?"

"Yes. I need a crate for myself so I can serve the visitors here." the man answers. Nui's clone collects tea packages from the crate and already emptied one and a half crate.

"How about... 119.999 Yen?!"

"... what?"

"Or 120.001?"

"Why!?"

"Your price sounds boring, that's why." she smiles.

"Alright...?"

"If you guess why it's boring, I'll pay 10000 Yen extra!" Nui chuckles and closes her arms.

"Hm..."

"Got an idea?"

"... not yet, but... maybe... no, uh, uh..."

"Come on, it's not that difficult."

"... hm..."

"Wanna know?"

"Yes, please."

"Are you sure?" she asks, with her smile getting bigger.

"Yes!"

"Are you REAAAAALLY sure?"

"Yes, now tell me already!" the man answers slightly annoyed now. Nui inhales deeply, then exhales.

"I don't know either. As if I pay for your crates." Nui laughs. The man shakes his head annoyed. Senketsu and Satsuki have to grin, especially because Nui simply just did it.

"Very funny. Go back to your friends and leave me alone!"

"They aren't my friends! Ryuko and Satsuki are my big..." Nui reacts and then looks towards them. She briefly thinks, then sighs and looks back to the man, calm, and with a normal face expression.

"... actually, they are my friends, that's all."

"I don't care. Leave me alone." he reacts angry. The clone is done and makes a thumbsup with it's hand, then shrinks and rolls to Nui. Nui nods and grabs her clone. She walks back to Ryuko and Satsuki.

"So how's my performance?" she asks curious. Ryuko doesn't answer. Senketsu looks happy and Satsuki has a very slight smile in her face.

"I think it was funny, scarface." Senketsu chuckles.

"Yeah, it was amusing to an extent." Satsuki answers.

"And you, Ryuko?!"

"Annoy someone else."

"We should go." Satsuki says as she looks up a watch. The group stands up and leaves the harbor, with Satsuki laying down 150.000 Yen in bank notes. That's a lot. But Satsuki had a decent part of the REVOCS money on her bank account so she can afford it.

The group leaves Fuji. Their visit was definitely worth the time and fun - Ryuko bought some snacks, Satsuki got a huge pile of tea and Nui silk to tailor some clothes when she's bored. The area around Fuji is pretty relaxed - farms here and there, but nothing too special. Around 8 PM, the group arrives at the border to Shizouka, the capital city of said prefecture. There is a little hotel the group visits, with Ryuko and Satsuki sharing a room again. While Ryuko sits on a little couch, Satsuki reads product details of the tea packages.

"Europe's finest tea." she smiles. Only Soroi made tea as good as this one.

"You paid the guy?"

"Yes."

"Hm, aight. I gotta be real with you, Satsuki. The idea of walking on foot the entire time is still stupid to me. I mean yeah, it's fun and games, but fuck, we seriously gonna obey a weirdo from space?"

"You don't know how strong he is. Only Nui knows that. Besides, I won't take any risks. Not until we have a good plan."

"How strong can he already be..." Ryuko answers annoyed. Satsuki sighs.

"I know, Ryuko. You're accusing me of protecting Nui and treating you like a little kid."

"..."

"He was my father too. I lost him to this psychopath as well. But I don't want to lose you."

"..."

"Let's take a car already. Any car, I'd take a clown's car too if I have to. I just wanna get rid of all this bullshit."

"I know. Me too."

...

Day 4:

The next day begins. Mikisugi and Tsumugu sit in the command center while Houka works in the background. Sanageyama and Ira play Go at the moment.

"So how's it looking with the air ship?" Tsumugu asks Mikisugi and smokes.

"Probably done in a few months if we are lucky. We have to get more recruits."

"Hm."

"But in good news, the armor of Satsuki's friends is done."

"Good." Tsumugu answers and puts out the cigarette. Mikisugi seems to think slightly sad.

"You still thinking of her, huh?"

"... yeah, I do. I sometimes ask myself what my wife would think if she would see me like that. All of us."

"She'd probably call you crazy. And then she'd jump at you."

"Heh, I was always crazy for her." Mikisugi grins and moves his hair back.

"Naked soldiers, all heavily armed and trained to destroy alien clothes." he grins in disbelief.

"If it wouldn't be so sad and overkill, you could laugh about it better."

"Yeah. But I'm still proud of our group. Kinda like a second family."

"Indeed."

"We should ask Jakuzure if she could prepare a concert or something. Would be a nice change of pace for the soldiers." Mikisugi suggests. Tsumugu shrugs.

"If it doesn't annoy anyone, yeah."

"I'll make sure it won't. Jakuzure loves music and recently she's pretty serious about it."

"I'll take your word for it."

"Cool."

...

"Are we there yet?!" Ryuko asks Satsuki impatient.

"No."

"Hey, Ryuko, you told me I shouldn't ask that and now you do it!" Nui chuckles.

"Shut it."

"Nope, nope, nope!" Nui laughs. Most of the day was spent with walking around at the coast the entire time without anything

interesting happening. Around 4:30 PM, Satsuki notices Ryuko biting into a tasty looking snack, and briefly after, they arrive at a sign.

"What's that?"

"Corn cake. It's neat, want some too?" Ryuko answers and continues munching.

"I want one!" Nui says.

"Should have bought one for yourself."

"No, I meant that sign." Satsuki clears up and walks towards a sign near the road.

"5-Star Restaurant at the Oi-River..." she reads silent. Ryuko and Nui wait for her.

"Hotel rooms and amusement park..." and then she takes out her map.

"About three hours way." Satsuki guesses. She puts her map away and smiles towards the other two.

"Well, looks like we are eating in a Restaurant today." she smiles excited. Ryuko reacts with a smile as well.

"And then there's me, I'm just hanging around on Ryuko's shoulder. That's unfair." Senketsu comments and sounds like he'd be smiling.

"Someone's gotta stitch a mouth for you." his wearer reacts.

"I can stitch a mouth for him!"

"Yeah right, forget it."

"You are so mean to me! I haven't done anything to you! Well, at least not in this life!" Nui smiles innocent.

"You do, you exist."

"Is that your best counter?" Nui asks curious.

"You're not worth being countered."

"Too bad, I'm trying my best."

"Scarface, please let Ryuko alone and talk with me. Ryuko isn't... too happy with you. I mean, I'm not either, but hey, you and me, life fibers, you know..."

"Oh of course, I'd love to talk with you once you're a big boy. With legs, and arms. I can make some for you!"

"Eh, good offer but maybe not from you. You like the scar on your eye by any chance?"

"I do, it looks really cool, doesn't it?!"

"Not really, no." he chuckles.

"Whaaat?!"

"You looked better when you had only one eye."

"Talking from experience, right, my dear? Besides, I always look great, boys and girls love me! I bet Ryuko secretly thinks about me every time she takes a shower!" Nui chuckles. Ryuko suddenly turns around and tries hitting Nui, but Nui dodges again.

"Missed me again, darling!"

At the evening, the group arrives at the Oi-River. The water here is clear and sounds really nice too, and the river ends in the ocean not far away - you can see the coast here. The wind howls a bit, but thankfully, they arrive shortly after at Kakegawa. A small city where this 5-Star Restaurant is located. And it looks awesome, like a palace, with lights everywhere, terraces in the upper floor, and an

hotel that is actually connected to the building. Everything here looks impressive, and most importantly, everyone is excited for the food.

Inside the palace like building, it gets even more impressive. Noble and expensive chairs, a huge bar with about 20 people sitting there and four barkeepers, and surely about three dozens of hungry guests. The walls are golden colored, there are red carpets, and the lights on the ceiling are beautiful. A waiter appears.

"Good evening. Did you order a reservation?" the waiter asks polite. Ryuko and Nui are amazed.

"No. We would like a table for three." Satsuki answers.

"Very well. Take a seat, I'll be right back." the waiter reacts and points on a table in the corner of the room. The building and interior is marvelous for Satsuki, it's nothing compared to Tokyo or Ôsaka. The group takes a seat at a chair in the corner of the huge room. Their seats are red, very comfortable and soft and warm. After two minutes, the waiter appears again. The three of them chose a drink already.

"Here's the menu. Can I offer a drink already?"

"Cola." Ryuko says first.

"Water." Satsuki continues and...

"Sake." Nui reacts and finishes. The waiter quickly writes their wishes down on a little notepad and walks to the bar. The group curiously looks at the menu and is amazed by the various food the Restaurant offers. Ryuko is speechless, Satsuki smiles and Nui's eyes shine briefly.

"They even got Steak and stuff... damn..." Ryuko mumbles.

"Indeed, although I'm trying to not be too euphoric. A huge menu isn't always good. On the other hand... 5-Star Restaurant has to mean

something." Satsuki comments.

"Oooohhh, Fish!" Nui smiles happy. Briefly after, the waiter arrives.

"Did the ladies chose something to eat already?" the waiter asks curious. Ryuko turns to the waiter first, then Satsuki, then Nui.

"I'll take that big Steak, Number 12. With rice and salad, and for starters, a little bowl with fries. Oh, and I wanna try out that Wagyu-Steak if that's cool."

"Excellent choice. You?"

"Number 1, a Miso-soup. And number 28 - Curry and a huge bowl of rice with a little salad including dressing, please." Satsuki answers.

"Gladly. And you?"

"50B - Sashimi. And SM2 - the huge Sushi-menu. I want more Gunkan Sushi, and fried rice for starters." Nui orders smiling. The waiter nods.

"No problem. Should take about fifteen to maximum twenty minutes and we are done." he answers and walks to the kitchen. The group looks around a bit.

"Didn't knew there's a Restaurant like that around here." Ryuko mentions surprised.

"Didn't knew it either. You, Harime?"

"Eh, heard of it, but never visited it."

"I want some food too!" Senketsu gripes envious.

"For real now, I took a look at the tables, the food looks and smells awesome."

"Indeed, Ryuko."

"Reminds me a bit of the restaurant Mako and I visited on our date."
Ryuko smiles nostalgic.

After five minutes, the waiter comes back with the appetizers. The bowl of fries for Ryuko, the Miso soup for Satsuki and the Sashimi plate for Nui. The food looks, smells and tastes great and even the fries that are rather unusual to find, are tasty and freshly made. Satsuki smiles satisfied and Nui thankfully has her mouth shut.

"Hmhmhmh..." Senketsu grumbles envious. Ryuko has to chuckle. After about twelve more minutes, the main dishes arrive. They are well made, smell good and are absolutely fantastic. Ryuko is amazed. The rice is fresh and tasty, the salad juicy and the little sauce for it a bit sweet and gives a nice additional flavour. The steak is perfect, and Ryuko didn't even try the Wagyu-Steak yet. Satsuki is happy with the curry and enjoys it with smaller bites to enjoy it longer, and Nui approaches the Sushi with almost scary precision and calmness. After all, there are rules on how to eat Sushi. Senketsu doesn't know where to look at first - Ryuko's steak, Satsuki's curry or Nui's Sushi.

"The Curry is very good." Satsuki judges satisfied.

"Try the steak." Ryuko suggests and cuts off a little part of the steak, giving it to Satsuki. Even though that isn't exactly the best manners, Satsuki still tries it out and likes a lot.

"Not the best steak I ate yet but damn sure one of the best." she says impressed.

"Hell yeah."

"Pff, you and your 'Curry.' Sushi is..." Nui grins and kisses the air, then shoves a little piece of Maki to Ryuko and Satsuki, which surprises both of them and Senketsu - Nui shares her food after all! That's... unusual.

"Wow, uh... thanks." Ryuko answers uncomfortable and tries out the Maki. She carefully dips it into the soy sauce and eats it. Satsuki does the same.

"That's really good actually. Nothing compared to a proper Sushi bar... but good." Satsuki reacts surprised. Ryuko nods. To be fair, Satsuki shares some of the Curry, but Nui declines, as she is pescetarian - which means she eats fish, but not meat like chicken for example.

The evening continues pretty relaxed. After the good meal, the group sits around for a while and drinks some more Sake and chill out. Ryuko has the box with the scissor blades safely under the table. This is a pretty weird moment, considering Ryuko and Satsuki come along with Nui who isn't annoying at the moment. Well, Satsuki comes along with Nui better than Ryuko, that's for sure, and Ryuko laughed once after Nui made a bad joke. Eventually, Satsuki pays the food after half an hour - 10400 Yen. A good price, considering the good food. The group then proceeds to the hotel, checks in and goes to sleep.

Day 5:

(AN: The Track for this scene is "Blumenkranz Instrumental". I suggest you listen to it on YouTube while reading this scene. Have fun. :))

It's night. Satsuki stands on top of the Honnouji-Academy, holding Bakuzan.

"Fear is Freedom! Subjugation is Liberation! Contradiction is Truth! Those are the facts of this world, and you will ALL surrender to them, you pigs..."

Satsuki feels an aura behind her.

"..."

"Fear is Freedom? Subjugation is Liberation? Contradiction is Truth? Oh my... you sound like a dictator."

"..."

"It certainly causes an impact on my human shell, as illusional as it may be. Answer me this, my dear."

"..."

"Wasn't I the person that made you the woman you are today? And wasn't it your dad that made you rebel against my reign?"

"..."

"It needed an army of kids under your command to even out your inferiority. Haven't I gave you all you wanted, and even more? Isn't there a lot more behind your truly powerful speech? Afraid of the Life Fibers, as they are truly the strongest of beings that existed in the universe, and therefore, afraid of evolution? Is the kind of subjugation, of absolute dominance, that you propagate against me not also something you would apply to yourself as well? After all, you killed and humiliated those who were against you, only to fulfill your ambitions. How selfish. And wasn't it not just the contradiction towards me, but also the contradiction towards responsibility, that you would never have to lead my reign... my... legacy? A worldwide company, built on human corpses, and look at you now... the circle closes. I destroyed lifes. And you did as well."

"... pathetic."

"Is that so? Isn't everything I believe in pathetic to you? Survival of the fittest - the concept you believed in is the concept you inherited. It's why you were so cruel to everyone. Even to your friends. It's why you destroyed everyone who was against you. To emphasize your strength and power. It could have destroyed your first sister. All, because of your selfish ambitions. And yet I am evil? I am the monster?"

"..."

"Fear is Freedom. Subjugation is Liberation. Contradiction is Truth... do you still believe in it? Afraid of Evolution. Afraid of Responsibility. Subjugating to these fears. And contradicting them, to make sure everyone thinks you are still the strong woman you pretended to be. And yet... almost every night and almost every dream, you end up here, practicing your speech when no one looks at it. Because you fear no one will take you serious."

"... leave, mother..."

"The cruel truth, the contradiction in your own speech is... you are weak. You aren't worth the air you breathe. Neither you, nor your sisters Ryuko and Nui."

"... how dare you..."

"Your fear of this world, of responsibility, of the loss of your dear sister Ryuko and your beliefs will cost her some day. And I sense this day will come closer every day. Will you cry, when she dies? Answer me this..." Ragyo smiles and walks in front of Satsuki, looking directly into her eyes.

"What is clothing?"

"BEGONE FROM MY DREAMS, YOU WRETCHED PIG!"

Satsuki wakes up. It's 3 AM. She falls back onto her pillow and breathes deeply.

"I won't let you die, Ryuko..."

"I won't let you and my friends be harmed..."

"I won't..." she mumbles scared.

...

...

...

The Neo-REVOCS army sent by the Couturier has arrived in Shizouka, and therefore they aren't too far away from Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui who just left Kakegawa and the Oi-River. The civilians who see the army move slowly with the transporters are surprised and curious to an extent. The Neo-REVOCS transporters seem to carry more than just soldiers. Around twenty of these transporters drive on the highway.

Ryuko yawns bored. Senketsu however is pretty curious. The group arrived at the old castle of Hamamatsu and looks around.

"Wow... the way they built this "castle" is really cool actually." Senketsu mentions excited.

"If you say so." Ryuko answers bored and puts her hands into the jeans pockets. Satsuki meanwhile talks a bit with a tour guide. She's interested in the castle as well. Nui on the other hand climbs up the castle without anyone noticing it. Ryuko walks near a wall. The castle is divided into several layers, and moat is in front of the walls. She's currently in the first out of three layers, with each layer higher than the other and protected by walls with little windows you can look out. Senketsu looks at them curious.

"Ah, so this is how they defended the castle then, huh? Bowmen stood in front of the windows and shot the attackers. They really have a nice design."

"The way you talk reminds me of the old history lessons with Mikisugi back then. If it wouldn't have been for you, I would have failed every test." Ryuko smiles. Senketsu chuckles. Ryuko walks up the next layer of the castle, but there's pretty much the same stuff. Ending up in the highest layer, she walks into the actual castle. Boring interior, nothing more. Desks, chairs, Samurai armor, just

boring stuff. Ryuko leaves the castle again and then watches Nui arriving on top of the castle.

"Hey, Ryuko! The view is great here! You should come up! We could pretend to be pirates!" Nui laughs. Ryuko shakes her head.

"The colors are neat too." Senketsu mumbles to himself interested. The next 30 minutes are boring as well, at least for Ryuko. She just sits around while Satsuki curiously looks around some more, and Nui just enjoys the view and throws little rocks onto the peasants and quickly hides so that they think the sky hates them for some reason. But thankfully, after that, the journey can continue and the group leaves the castle. Satsuki is happy about a little souvenir she bought from the tour guide - a small figurine of the clan leader who owned the castle.

"Neat." she comments and puts the figurine into her bag.

Around evening, the group arrives at Toyohashi and therefore the last city before Nagoya - the city of Neo-REVOCS. Ryuko feels kind of uncomfortable the entire day already and has headaches as they take the elevator up to their rooms briefly after checking in the local hotel. Ryuko leans back on the wall, while Nui whistles around a bit.

"You alright, Ryuko?" Satsuki asks worried.

"Yeah... yeah, I'm good. I just feel dizzy every once in a while." Ryuko answers.

"I know, that's why I ask."

"Yeah... I... don't know, it's probably just the air or all the walking."

"I can buy some medicine tomorrow if you want, it might help."

"I'm good, Satsuki, but thanks." Ryuko smiles.

"Ryuko seems to be alright. I haven't noticed a difference in her blood or body yet." Senketsu comments. The elevator opens and Nui

leaves it first, walking to her room. Satsuki and Ryuko follow her. Satsuki throws the key to Nui's room towards her. Just as Nui wants to open the room and enter it, Ryuko suddenly falls down.

"Ryuko!?" Satsuki asks scared and holds Ryuko still. Nui looks down at Ryuko worried.

"... ah fuck, I haven't slept well anyway... I mean, I sleep bad already but..."

"Ryuko, I'm serious, I can also call an ambulance if I have to."

"It's okay, Satsuki." Ryuko answers worried towards Satsuki's worries.

"You should take off your Kamui, darling." Nui orders in a serious and calm tone. Both sisters look at Nui confused.

Silence for a moment.

"Why should I do that?" Ryuko asks evil.

"I'm not trusting your Kamui and Satsuki doesn't either. If you aren't as stupid as I hope, you better take this thing off. I wouldn't wear that thing until I fully know who made it, and how." Nui explains serious.

"Yeah because you are unbelievable selfish, you only wear your own shit. Fuck you and stop pretending I would like or even come along with you just because I laugh once or twice about your jokes."

"Eh... one of the few times I care for someone and it's declined, that's why I love not giving a fuck about everyone." Nui answers annoyed by that and enters her room. Then she closes the door and locks it. Ryuko shakes her head and stands up.

"Drink some water and rest a bit. We can walk tomorrow a bit later if you like, it's not like we are in a hurry." Satsuki suggests.

"I think I do that, yeah. I guess I'm just worried about my school."

"I'm with you, and Senketsu too. It's gonna be okay." Satsuki smiles. Ryuko nods and then briefly hugs her.

"Good night." Satsuki says smiling. Ryuko wishes her a good night as well and then, both enter her room and go to sleep.

...

"Oh, dear Nui, you see the problem, but you can't prove it because no one trusts you. Ah... if only someone would let you investigate the Kamui. But that would be too late as well... after all, the needle has been set." Ichiro smiles mischievous...

...

Day 6:

The wind howls outside. Senketsu wakes up, jumps from the wall and hops to Ryuko. The alarm is off. It's 8:55 AM.

"Ryuko?" Senketsu asks. Ryuko doesn't react, she is still sleeping. Senketsu hops closer to her until he's directly in front of her.

"Ryuko?" he asks again. Ryuko slowly opens her eyes and then jumps up anxious.

"Woah!"

"Hehe. Sorry." Senketsu answers ashamed and blushes. Ryuko chuckles and yawns, then she picks up Senketsu and hugs him. It's snowing outside. Then, she turns him to the window and both watch the snow falling.

"Hm. That's the snow Satsuki was talking about a few days, I suppose." Ryuko mentions.

"It looks really nice." Senketsu answers.

"It is." she smiles and puts Senketsu next to the window. While Ryuko gets ready in the bathroom, Senketsu watches the snow like a little kid, happy to see it fall down. He really likes the snow somehow.

Half an hour later, Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui leave the hotel after a short breakfast and continue their journey.

"It surely is colder than usual." Ryuko says. Satsuki nods.

"Mhm."

"Don't you wanna get yourself a jacket or something?"

"If it gets colder later on, I can buy one quickly, yes. There are enough stores in the next city, and if I have to, I'll buy something in Nagoya."

"I could tailor you a wonderful jacket, sweetie!" Nui suggests.

"Yeah right, don't think about it, asshole." Ryuko answers.

"Calm down, Ryuko. I'll keep your offer in my mind, Harime." Satsuki answers. Nui nods happy. The group travels near the coast of Toyohashi where they can see some fish cutters about to catch some fish. The area itself is rather empty and lonely though. A few hours later, they arrive at a street that leads into a little forest. Ryuko stops there and looks at Satsuki. Satsuki walks up to Ryuko and see's the sign.

"Masamune High School." Satsuki reads quiet to herself. Ryuko sighs.

"Do you want to go there?" Satsuki asks worried.

"Yeah..."

"Alright."

"I've been... thinking about this for quite some time already, but... I haven't talked about it a lot, it's... you know."

"I do. It's okay, Ryuko. Let's go." Satsuki says and walks forward. Ryuko and Nui follow her into the forest. The forest looks quiet. It's not dark or anything, but it somehow gives an uncomfortable feeling. There is a town half an hour away. However, Satsuki could imagine around summer time, the forest would make up for a nice visit.

"I knew you would feel uncomfortable about your old school, that's why I never asked about it. What are you trying to accomplish, if I may ask?" Satsuki asks.

"I just wanna... well, I just want to see how everything changed here, and... I want to find out what happened to my gang. I don't care about most of them, but... we've always stayed together..."

"I see. Alright." Satsuki answers. The group arrives the school yard. The school is surrounded by concrete walls, and there is a huge gate with the sign of the school - Masamune High. Right now, students are outside, playing little snow ball battles or munch their lunch on banks under the roof. The students here are around 16-20 years old. Ryuko hesitates first, but as Satsuki smiles and nods towards her, Ryuko finally makes the step forward. Nui is bored.

"So many stupid humans." Nui mumbles grinning.

"I'll take a look at the office and ask there, I'll be away for five or ten minutes. You guys can look around too if you like."

"Naturally. I'll keep an eye on Harime. You won't cause trouble, right, Harime?" Satsuki asks.

"Oh please, I'm never causing trouble." Nui smiles.

"And if something is wrong, Ryuko, lock yourself up in the bathroom and talk with Senketsu, he's with you after all." Satsuki smiles. Ryuko nods grateful.

"Sure." the little sister smiles and inhales, then exhales. Then, she enters the school building, first hesitating, but then with a raised head and some strength thanks to Satsuki's words. Nui closes her arms bored and Satsuki looks around, but she is unimpressed. It really is just a normal school.

"Well..." Satsuki mumbles, unsure of what to do now.

"Your school was cooler." Nui says.

...

"Gonna break your minds slowly, but steady..." Ichiro chuckles...

...

Ryuko walks through the halls of her school. Although the halls are warm and seemingly renovated, it does feel very cold here. Students walk around here and there and lead conversations, but they ignore Ryuko. The building is shaped like an L and in the first floor is the canteen and a few class rooms, as well as a few bathrooms and a janitor's room. There is also a teachers room. Two teachers pass by Ryuko, but she can't recognize them. They're new apparently.

"Feels weird being here." Ryuko mumbles quietly to Senketsu.

"Mhm." he reacts. The snow still falls from the sky. Ryuko can see Satsuki and Nui investigating the school yard a bit more. Her big sister isn't impressed at all, and Nui pushes a swing. Following up, Ryuko walks up the stairs to the second floor where the office is. She stops for a brief moment and then continues.

"My gang had a battle here back then. One of our most difficult battles."

"Is that so? What happened?" Senketsu asks careful. Seems like the students don't care if Senketsu or Ryuko talks, everyone is busy with themselves.

"Another gang had a problem with my leader, so we fought them. One of them fell down the stairs and was bleeding really bad. He survived but he really looked ugly, needless to say he got into a hospital."

"Damn..."

"Mhm." Ryuko hums and enters the second floor. The hall she's walking in leads to her old class room. The door is open, and so she takes a little look at it. Thirty chairs and desks, a few lockers, a blackboard, a few windows, nothing special.

"Still the same classroom." Ryuko mumbles.

"Looks like a normal room from the academy." Senketsu mentions. Ryuko nods.

"Excuse me?" someone asks behind Ryuko. She turns around. It's a teacher.

"Ryuko Matoi?"

"Miss Tanka." Ryuko reacts calm.

"Haven't seen you around here..." the teacher says annoyed. The teacher seems about 40 years old, brown hair, pony tail, nice suit... that's pretty much it.

"Indeed."

"What would a troublemaker like you want here? Didn't you caused enough problems?"

"Just wanted to take a look at my old school and how my old "friends" are doing."

"Kaori is at the office. He's a social worker."

"Kaori's a social worker!?"

"Yes, he is. He applied a year after he graduated since he couldn't find a job. Seems like you did though. Good suit."

"Thanks. I'll take a look at it." Ryuko answers. Ryuko leaves the class room then. Senketsu looks up to her which she notices.

"Yeah that's how it is here. I'm kind of famous." Ryuko comments and walks next to the lockers.

"We locked up a rather chubby guy here cause he sat down on the wrong seat. Hope he's alright..." Ryuko mentions full of regrets and sighs with a bad feeling.

"Because he sat on the wrong seat?"

"Mhm. Kaori's seat. He was our leader. We were five people. Kaori was pretty strong but not really the smartest. Kikuko was good with words and looked good, she also was a great liar, hell, we sometimes couldn't tell if she was telling us the truth either. Taigen was our nerd. If we had something in mind, he planned it out. Someone mocked him for wearing glasses. Fucking glasses." Ryuko explains.

"Damn it. Your class had to be terrible."

"We all were terrible. No one was really innocent. Then there was Daisuke. Daisuke was a rich clown, he paid people so that we could do whatever we want, and if someone was a traitor, he paid some people to make sure the traitor got what he deserved." she continues and arrives at the office.

"Welp, and then there's me. I was our fighter. Kaori was a good fighter, but if he was knocked out, then it took a while until he was fine again, unlike me for obvious reasons. Worst thing was when someone rammed a knife into my left arm. Hurt like hell but I was able to pull it out easily and continued fighting. I've had so many fights here..."

"This sounds horrible. Ryuko... I'm sorry to hear that. I didn't know how bad it was here."

"Well, the school did change at least from the looks of it and apparently the students here are far less hostile than before. You know, you sometimes just see how evil people are just by looking into their eyes." Ryuko continues to explain and opens the door to the office. Kaori stands there, alone, at the moment. He's a tad bit bigger than Ryuko, has some muscles, not many, but some, short hair and a black school uniform. He seems alright though.

"Hey, asshole." Ryuko says annoyed. Kaori turns around and raises his eyebrows in disbelief.

"Shiiiiitt... Ryuko, you've been away for a while." Karoi mentions. His voice sounds calm, but powerful, and a bit smokey. He reaches his hand towards Ryuko but she doesn't react.

"Still as unfriendly as always.

"You never know when it comes to you."

"I've changed, girl."

"Yeah, combed your hair, I'm impressed."

"And more. I'm working here now. I want my reputation to get better when I work. Not like I care about the peeps here, but you gotta start somewhere."

"You fucked me over, asshole."

"Well that happens when you try to protect some idiots."

"Idiots? It was a fucking couple. Cause of us, the boy landed in the damn psych ward!"

"So?"

"... yeah, you really changed." Ryuko mentions. Kaori grins and leans onto a wall.

"So whatcha doin, Ryuko?"

"Wanted to take a look around. Still have some contact with the others?"

"Nah. Kikuko went to REVOCS, Taigen ran away like you and died in a car crash and Daisuke lives on the street..."

And while Ryuko talks with her former leader, Satsuki and Nui continue walking through the school and enter is eventually.

"Satsuki, my dear, absolutely EVERYTHING here is worse than on your lil academy."

"That's the third time you said that now."

"Because it's true." Nui smiles. Satsuki nods and walks up the stairs, until she notices Nui walking to some students who look at her confused due to her scar.

"You look really weird." a student says to Nui.

"Hah, right! I'm not the one wearing a black school uniform! That's booooooooooring!"

"You look like this weirdo from REVOCS." another student comments on Nui's look.

"I am the "weirdo" from REVOCS." Nui answers.

"Hah, yeah right." the student chuckles and walks away with his friend. Nui gets grabbed by Satsuki the moment she wants to follow the students.

"Leave them. They don't know how great you are, after all, right?" Satsuki smiles towards Nui.

"Nice try, Satsuki." Nui smiles back and follows the students. Satsuki follows her.

"... to find my dad. That's why I left. That, and because I was done with your shit. We only fucked things up." Ryuko explains angry. Kaori shakes his head.

"Your father never cared for you, dude."

"But he WAS my father."

"Eh, what a shitty dad. And what's this stupid box on your back? You playing guitar or something?" Kaori asks grinning.

"None of your business."

"Why not? We're friends, aren't we?"

"We're not friends."

"Look at you, trying to be tough again. Keep the talking to me and the fighting for yourself, that's what you've always been good for after all.."

In the meantime, Neo-REVOCS arrives at the school. A few Ashigaru enter the school yard and look around, with the main army being a few hundred meters away still. The students can hear the transporters already. Satsuki chases Nui through the corridor who harasses the students.

"Dude, fuck off, what's your problem?!" a student asks.

"I want you to apologize for calling me a "weirdo." Weirdo is a bad word and every good human doesn't say that."

"Are you done, Harime?" Satsuki asks.

"Look, Harime. These students were very unfriendly and I'm sure they want to apologize for that IF you don't harass them. Otherwise,

we will end up having a fight and that would make Ryuko angry. That wouldn't be nice, considering the fact that Ryuko has the scissor blades. Right, Harime?" Satsuki asks. They can hear people talking outside. Satsuki and Nui look to the school yard and see the Neo-REVOCS vehicles. arriving. Ashigaru and Samurai leave the transporters.

"A fight, you said?" Nui asks smiling.

"God damn it." Satsuki reacts and watches as the first Ashigaru pull out their Katanas and submachineguns. Other Ashigaru empty their transporters. They carry field cannons.

"Kiryuin and Harime!" a Samurai yells and points at both of them since he saw them through the window. The Ashigaru open their fire shortly.

"You were the asshole that..." Ryuko reacts angry and then hears gunshots and an explosion, causing a quake in the building.

"What was that!?"

"Oh no..." Ryuko mumbles surprised and runs out of the office, seeing the Ashigaru and Samurai approaching the school, attacking the students and killing them. Screams are audible.

"What the hell? Who are they!?"

"Neo-REVOCS. Stay in cover.

"Neo-REVOCS?! But..."

"No time to explain. Stay in cover and get to my companions, you'll notice them!" Ryuko orders Kaori and pulls out the needle on her gauntlet, transforming into Senketsu Azami. His eye's largen.

"HOW DID YOU DO THAT!?" Kaori yells confused. Ryuko throws the scissor blade box out of the window, jumps out as well, and as the box opens, Ryuko grabs the scissor blades in the air, making a roll

and then attacking the Ashigaru. Kaori runs down the stairs and meets up with Satsuki.

"WAIT, AREN'T YOU..."

"On the ground." Satsuki orders and pushes Kaori down, drawing her Katana and activating the Wrath Regalia. Nui gets next to Kaori as she notices him looking at her in disbelief.

"What's up, sweetheart?" Nui asks and pulls out her REVOCS standard fiber rifle. She aims at the first Ashigaru and starts shooting.

The Neo-REVOCS field cannons start shooting at the school building. Fire spreads out, glasses break apart, screams are audible, and bullets and snow fill the air. Ryuko fights her way through the Ashigaru and is then attacked by two Samurai as she reaches the gate of the school, where the cannons are.

"Matoi!" a Samurai says threatening and attacks her with his team mate. Ryuko blocks the attacks easily, then proceeds to slam the scissor blades against one of them. Satsuki follows Ryuko and defeats a few more swordsmen, then helps her sister by attacking a Samurai from behind, kicking his back. He falls down. Satsuki pulls off his helmet and knocks him unconscious. The other Samurai is being slammed into a field cannon by Ryuko. The cannon explodes, the Samurai flies into the air and spins around. More Ashigaru arrive at the muddy battlefield.

"WHERE ARE YOUR CLONES, HARIME!?" Satsuki screams towards Nui.

"Clones galore!" Nui grins and throws twelve clones out of the window. They expand briefly after. All of them have only one eye and wield a needle blade. Briefly after, the clones attack the Ashigaru and Samurai. Despite the clones not being able to sustain damage, they can dodge attacks well. Since the Ashigaru are not used against the clones, they have a hard time beating them. It's easier for the

Samurai but only if they work together. One Ashigaru after another falls, while Ryuko and Satsuki fight through the field cannons. The cannons - four out of six are still ready - fire at the school. Walls break apart, blood spreads on the battlefield. A field cannon tries to shoot briefly after, but in the last moment, Ryuko kicks the barrel to the side into the direction of a Neo-REVOCS transporter. The cannon accidentally then shoots the transporter, but since Ryuko is too close, she's blown away. Nui chuckles as she see's Ryuko getting slammed into a swing.

"These bastards..." Ryuko mumbles angry, with mud and snow on her face and body. She quickly wipes off the mud on Senketsu's eye and then continues. Ashigaru run into the building and attack the students, which doesn't mind Nui too much, at least until the Ashigaru suddenly decide to attack Nui first, probably because she is armed and therefore dangerous. Kaori watches Nui fighting.

"You guys look funny." Nui chuckles and attacks the Ashigaru, dodging their attacks, then punching one with her fist and eventually shooting him in the head and the soldier behind him as well due to the penetration. A Samurai appears and attacks Kaori. He dodges and runs out of the building, leaving the fight to Nui. Nui hits the arm of the Samurai. Blood leaves his arm, then she attacks with the buttstock of her weapon, hitting the Samurai's head. Kaori leaves the building, hiding behind some debris. Fire conquered the entire upper floor. He watches Ryuko getting shot by Ashigaru, as blood and bullets leave her torso and the right shoulder where Senketu's missing eye is. However, Ryuko continues fighting which confuses him. Satsuki protects the fleeing students and tries to hold off the Ashigaru, and as the last students escape, Satsuki runs towards the gunners that shoot at the iwndows and walls.

"Worthless machines." Satsuki says silent to herself in a disgusted voice. Even though the fight is going well for Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui, more and more Ashigaru appear from the forest. The missing cannons - two out of six - still continue shooting.

"Ryuko, attack the Samurai!" Senketsu suggests.

"But the cannons... !"

"Trust me!"

"Alright..." Ryuko agrees and attacks the Samurai that haven't noticed Ryuko yet as they have been too busy with Nui's clones and the students. More and more Samurai's fall due to Ryuko's scissor blades, making them completely naked. The Life Fibers from their armor enter Ryuko's body and Senketsu, increasing their power. Senketsu briefly lightens up red.

"Now hit the ground with the blades, Ryuko!" Senketsu orders to her. Ryuko slams the scissor blades onto the ground towards one of the field cannons. Life Fibers load from Senketsu into the scissor blades, the blades lighten up red and purple, then suddenly, the ground explodes in front of them in a three meter long row, and the cannon explodes.

"WOAH!" Ryuko reacts surprised. Motivated, Ryuko tries the same attack with the last cannon and destroys it, but briefly before it explodes, it can hit Ryuko and shreds away her legs, causing her to fall down into the mud. Kaori shivers scared as she see's Ryuko like that. Satsuki runs to the transporters and attacks the Ashigaru as they decide to flee. The school building is completely ruined. Nui and a few students and teachers leave the burning building.

"They flee!" Satsuki says towards Nui and Ryuko. Nui runs to Satsuki and meets up with her, while Ryuko slowly regenerates her legs. Nui shoots at some of the Ashigaru while Satsuki is able to reach a transporter that is about to drive away. She eliminates the Ashigaru driver and throws him out, then deals with the rest of them. From the about 240 Ashigaru and 16 Samurai that attacked the school, about 80-90 Ashigaru and 4 Samurai are left...

The school burns. Snow falls from the sky. Dead Ashigaru are everywhere. Broken armor of Samurai, and dead students and teachers lay around as well. Ryuko looks around on the battlefield as her legs are fully regenerated. As Satsuki and Nui come back, they

see Ryuko sitting in the middle of the battlefield. She lets her blades fall on the ground as she comprehends all the chaos, and she is soaked with mud and snow. Satsuki shakes her head. Nui sighs annoyed.

"My poor clones, all dirty now..." she mumbles annoyed and starts collecting them slowly. Then she jumps up scared.

"FUUUUUUCK!" Ryuko screams angry and hits the ground. Kaori crawls towards Ryuko and then stands up. Ryuko looks up to him as he stands up, just like Senketsu.

"... I heard about you. You're that girl the people talk about right?" he asks disappointed but also, and especially angry. Ryuko nods slowly.

"You've destroyed REVOCS. And this... Kiryuin bitch that is supposed to be dead is your sister?" he asks. She nods again. Satsuki tries to comfort a few students in the background and helps them get out of the school yard.

"Don't worry, you are alright now." Satsuki tries to comfort.

"Stupid snow." Nui mumbles annoyed.

"... so you lead these people to the school?"

"... I didn't knew they would chase us..." Ryuko says disappointed. Kaori drags Ryuko up onto her legs.

"Look me in the eyes." he says purely evil. Ryuko looks at him.

"I always asked myself why your eyes were different. You're one of those... things, that wanted to kill all of us. Life Fibers, right?"

"... I..."

"You're just as fucked up as REVOCS, ain't you?"

"No, Kaori, I..." and then, Ryuko receives an uppercut all of a sudden.

"You stupid bitch! You stupid fucking bitch! YOU LEAD THEM TO THIS PLACE! EVERYONE'S DEAD BECAUSE OF YOU!" Kaori screams annoyed and attacks Ryuko, hitting her face. Ryuko blocks with her fist and attacks back.

"YOU RUN AWAY AND SERIOUSLY COME BACK YEARS LATER TO FUCK ALL OF US!? YOU FUCKING BITCH, I'LL KILL YOU!" he screams and spits on her face. Then, he suddenly grabs the scissor blades.

"AND WHAT IS THIS?" he asks angry. Ryuko pushes Kaori away.

"Drop the weapons!"

"Weapons!?"

"DROP THE WEAPONS!" Ryuko reacts angry.

"FUCK YOU!" he screams and attacks with the red scissor blade which is pretty heavy for him though. Satsuki comes back and see's him using the blades. She is shocked and instantly draws her Katana. Ryuko dodges, but Kaori grabs her back and aims at Ryuko's neck.

"WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE!?" Kaori screams.

Suddenly, a shot is audible, and blood spreads into Ryuko's face. Kaori falls down. Nui walks towards Kaori. His kneecap is completely gone. Blood is everywhere.

"You think you could attack my Ryuko and get away with it?" Nui asks annoyed and reloads her weapon. A satisfying "Kling" rings out.

"NUI!" Ryuko screams. Kaori is scared and moans painfully. Nui pushes Ryuko away and rams the rifle blade into Kaori's heart. Then she grins.

"What's wrong, my dear, does it hurt? I can help you get rid of the pain! Don't you worry! Ain't I am a kind girl?" Nui laughs and then rips the blade out of his body. Blood mixes with the mud and snow on the ground, and Kaori dies instantly. Satsuki walks towards Ryuko and Nui. Ryuko jumps at Nui full of anger which confuses her.

"YOU CRAZY MANIAC! YOU KILLED HIM! WHY DID YOU DO THAT?! THERE WAS NO NEED TO KILL HIM!"

"I only protected you?" Nui reacts confused.

"PROTECTED!?" Ryuko reacts and grabs the scissor blades.

"Ryuko!" Satsuki yells and runs to Ryuko. Ryuko doesn't react.

"YOU BITCH!" Ryuko screams and hits Nui's face. She's pretty confused. Satsuki then grabs Ryuko.

"Ryuko, stop this now!" Satsuki orders and grabs the scissor blades.

"Now my dress is dirty as well." Nui gripes.

"She killed Kaori! She..."

"ARE YOU DONE NOW!?" Satsuki screams angry.

Silence.

...

...

...

"It's okay, Ryuko. I saw it. He threatened you and Harime protected you. She went too far. Killing Harime now won't help us."

"Satsuki, Nui..."

"I know. Ryuko, calm down. You'll get your chance. I need you alive and well." Satsuki requests and then hugs Ryuko. Ryuko sighs.

"It's okay." Satsuki whispers into Ryuko's ears. She turns back into the normal suit.

"That's all my fault..."

"You couldn't see it coming. I shouldn't have made the mistake and trust Ichiro's words to protect you. This man can kill you and I won't let him get away with that." Satsuki answers regretful. Nui looks at Ryuko and Satsuki calmly.

"We got a car now. We'll drive to Nagoya. I know a hideout there. It'll bring you on different minds and you'll feel better again, I promise. And there are enough ways to be entertained."

"... alright..." Ryuko sighs. Nui walks to the car.

Briefly after, Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui leave the burning school and get to the transport vehicle Satsuki stopped moments ago. She starts driving. Ryuko sits next to Satsuki while Nui is in the passengers room.

The car leaves the area.

Eventually, the school breaks apart...

...

...

...

To be continued.

Across Japan, Pursued By Darkness 3-3

AN: Welcome to the big finale of Chapter 9 - check out the new story cover! Get yourself a tasty snack and enjoy, you'll need the concentration. This is one of the best chapters so far in my personal opinion, and I'm sure you will love it. I got some really fun ideas for this one. Enjoy! And open up YouTube if you like, cause there will be some scenes with music again! :)

(The Track for this scene is "Pusher of Illusion" from Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order. Listen to it while reading if you like by searching it on YouTube.)

People are talking. The atmosphere is nice. A restaurant with warm, red looking walls. It's rather small, but nice and comfortable. The late evening has arrived, it's about 9 PM now. Every once in a while, cars drive outside. And then, two young women laugh.

"I didn't knew you could use a fishing rod, Mako!" Ryuko grins and blushes a bit.

"I can't use a fishing rod, but I can swim! And getting the fishes out of the water is the main goal, right?!" Mako asks happy.

"I don't think this would count as proper fishing, but uh, sure..." Ryuko chuckles and looks down onto the table briefly, but she has to smile the entire time.

"Going to the cinema will be so fun! I'm so excited!"

"I can tell."

"But before, we will EAT! I am hungry! I even declined moms croquettes! I never do that!"

"Besides, then we eat them tomorrow." Ryuko answers with a warm smile. Mako nods happy. Both girls wear nice every day clothes in

their colors - red and blue up to black for Ryuko, and white-blue for Mako.

"Y-you know, Mako... I kinda still don't know what to say. This is my first date, after all." she explains hesitant and looks up to her friend.

"Mine too! But that's okay. A date is about coming together and being there for each other!" Mako explains smiling.

"Fair enough." Ryuko thinks and leans back. Shortly after, a waiter appears with tasty food for them. Mako rubs her hands excited and Ryuko's eyes shine slightly. The food smells good. Mako has a lot of Tempura food. That is basically fried food. Chicken, fish, even vegetables. Ryuko has some rice and a nice looking baked fish.

"Ohhh, Ryuko! I don't know what to eat first!"

"Hmm... try the fish first. Always start with the easy and light stuff and then work your way up." Ryuko suggests. Mako agrees to that, grabs a fish stick and eats it. It's very crispy and has a nice sounding crunch, but inside, the fish is really soft. Ryuko licks her lips. This looks really delicious. Then she concentrates on her fish, which is fairly good as well.

The evening continues enjoyable and relaxed. Both girls enjoy their food and make little jokes every once in a while, with Ryuko blushing whenever they have to laugh. After a while, the waiter appears curious.

"Did you enjoy your food?"

"We definitely did!" Ryuko answers satisfied. The waiter nods glad.

"Very good."

"Uhm, Ryuko? Can we get a little dessert too? Maybe ice cream?"

Ryuko nods.

"You heard her. We take two bowls of ice cream as well. The small ones." Ryuko suggests.

"Good choice. A dessert after the meal is always nice. Give us five minutes." the young man says and takes their plates, then he walks back to the kitchen.

"Welp, while we are waiting for our ice cream, Imma go to the toilet real quick, gotta clean my hands, the chicken you had was really greasy." Ryuko chuckles. Mako nods and smiles.

"But it was tasty!"

"It sure as hell was." she answers and stands up. Ryuko walks through the little restaurant in which up to 24 people can eat. Arriving at the toilettes, the light here flickers around, and the walls are white and kind of sterile. The young woman chuckles while washing her hands.

"Swimming with the fishes, Mako. I wanna see that." she smiles and closes the water tap. She looks up in the mirror and then hears a little giggle in the background.

Confused, Ryuko shrugs her shoulders and leaves the toilets again. Back in the restaurant, she sits back onto her seat. Mako has disappeared. She probably went, as confused as she sometimes can be, to the toilets for men, or she gets the ice bowls herself. But maybe she also has a gift for Ryuko? Who knows? Ryuko doesn't worry too much. She leans slightly onto the table with her arms and plays around with her hands a bit. The people here are really chill, as she notices. The cinema is on the other side of the hotel. A few people visit it already, but Ryuko doesn't worry, as the tickets are reserved already.

After a minute, Ryuko hears very noticable, loud steps. The voices of the guests slowly mute away, until she can only hear the wind howl. Ryuko notices the steps getting louder and louder, and then, the entrance door opens, and the wind blows in. The steps stop briefly.

"How long has it been, Ryuko?"

Ryuko looks around. A silhouette appears at the entrance door. The silhouette moves into the room, slowly, but focused, and it slowly becomes obvious that this is Nui Harime with her black, shining Life Fiber arms. Nui puts away her parasol and then sits down in front of Ryuko, where Mako sat a few minutes ago. Her arch enemy has a rather cold and serious look which is unusual for her. Ryuko can't do anything. She can only watch her and move her head, but she can't talk.

"322 days. It's been 322 days since I died." Nui explains calm.

"And on every day, I thought of you."

"..."

Nui starts making little gestures with her black hands.

"Evil plagues all of us. Like a parasite, it lives in our head. It's part of us. We can't change that. We can only live with it."

"..."

"I feel like I visit you at a very bad time? I'm sorry, I couldn't resist. It just has been a very long time. You missed me. I can see that." Nui explains calm and looks into Ryuko's eyes.

"My eye certainly missed looking at you. See it's smile?"

"..."

"Mako sits in front of you. You are hallucinating, and this is not a nightmare. This is a memory you draw into your head sometimes, just like now. Because you hate me. And I love you for that. Let's continue this memory."

"..."

"You can talk now. You are going to say "Fuck off, you stupid piece of shit" now. This will hurt Mako a lot and you will make her cry. You know what the joke in this situation is?"

"..."

"You can't change it. After all, it's a memory." she explains and stands up. Nui walks behind Ryuko and leans next to her left ear.

"Amuse toi." Nui wishes and snips her fingers. Mako appears in front of Ryuko, the guest voices become louder, and suddenly, Ryuko turns extremely angry and mad and looks at Mako, disgusted.

"Are you alright, Ryuko? I got our tickets already and..."

"FUCK OFF, YOU STUPID PIECE OF SHIT!" Ryuko yells at Mako...

...

"Ryuko?" Satsuki asks worried. Ryuko looks at Satsuki, confused and unsure about what happened. Then, she sighs.

"What happened? You haven't talked for an hour. Senketsu and I were worried."

"I... was only remembering something, that's all." she sighs. Satsuki nods. It's late evening, almost night. 10:30 PM.

"Move up the windows and dim them. We arrived in Nagoya." Satsuki orders. Ryuko moves the windows up and then presses a button on the console in front of her, which turns the windows black. Then, Ryuko looks out.

"Man. The storm really got us good, didn't it?"

"Mhm. It'll get worse tomorrow and the following day. We'll sleep in Nagoya today and disappear then next night. We can't walk around during daytime in Nagoya."

"And how are you doing, Senketsu?" Ryuko asks. Senketsu still is soggy.

"I'm alright. Hey, Satsuki? Is there a... laundry? I hate being washed but I really look bad." he chuckles.

"No, but bath tubs." Satsuki blinks towards her little cloth friend. Senketsu makes an happy eye. Ryuko looks around outside. She can't see much due to the heavy snow storm. The wind is strong. In the distance, huge walls are visible. Nui looks through a little window between Ryuko and Satsuki and watches her driving, but she seems to appear calm and chill at the moment. Neo-REVOCS units stand on the towers and walls of the huge wall. There are also spotlights everywhere, and Neo-REVOCS transporters driving around.

"What the fuck..." Ryuko says quiet in disbelief.

"I've seen Nagoya once. It was supposed to be a wonderful city 20 years ago, but that changed. Mother made a fortress out of this city. I was there with 14. Almost everyone in Nagoya is a fan of Neo-REVOCS and a consumer of their wares, and they are like that even today if you believe the media." Satsuki explains and approaches the walls.

"I never heard anything about Nagoya. How does that come?"

"People don't talk about Nagoya. Nagoya changed in such a short time... people stopped talking about it, not 20 years ago, not today and not during the prime time of the Honnouji-Academy. No one wanted to believe that a corporation like REVOCS was able to take over an entire city. You can prepare yourself. No matter what we are going to see, everything belongs to Neo-REVOCS, and the people there are absolutely loyal."

"Oh boy..." Ryuko answers quietly surprised and leans back. The Neo-REVOCS transporter they are in arrives at the walls. Ashigaru of Neo-REVOCS keep an eye out for intruders on the high towers. The walls are about 40-50 meters high. Here and there you can see

monorail stations and paths, some of them leaving Nagoya as well. Snow is everywhere, and it is thick. It has to be dangerously cold outside probably.

"I'm looking forward to my drink. I do not drink usually, but I have to, at least today. A nice bath, something warm to eat..." Satsuki mumbles excited.

"I gotcha." Ryuko answers and grins. Satsuki looks at her suit. It's just as dirty as Senketsu and Nui's dress. Via dark tunnels that are inside the walls of Nagoya, the group arrives in the main city as they see the first huge lights and buildings. Ryuko leans onto the console and is amazed, with her face almost touching the windows. Senketsu and her look speechless. Satsuki presses the GPS.

"Three more kilometers." a male voice says. Calmly, Satsuki continues driving.

No matter where you look at. Neo-REVOCS is everywhere. Logos, posters, people who wear Neo-REVOCS clothes, restaurants, bars, absolutely everything belongs to Neo-REVOCS here. The streets are rather quiet around this time, but glaring yellow lights enlighten the streets, with neon colors brightening up the skyscrapers and tower like buildings and apartments of the city. Everything feels a bit dystopian here. Living here would be certainly scary, but somehow fascinating. A chopper is audible in the background. The snow storm hit the city hard. A few Ashigaru patrol the streets sometimes, and Neo-REVOCS police cars move slowly through the streets.

"Look at this, Ryuko..." Satsuki says slightly disgusted.

"Man... all of this belongs to Neo-REVOCS?" Senketsu asks.

"But how does that work? I mean... after mother has died, at least SOME things had to change here!"

"No. After Ragyo's death, people continued living here as usual. They got used to REVOCS. After all, it was never truly disbanded

because of me." Satsuki explains.

"We produced our first COVERS here, my dears." Nui adds to that.

"Really?" Satsuki asks calm.

"Mhm. At the main manufacture near the Plaza. The biggest factory REVOCS ever had. Thousands of little humans can work there. I've perfected tailoring there." Nui explains, with Satsuki nodding interested.

"So that is why I never heard of you again."

"Yep." she answers and climbs back into the transport room. After around ten more minutes, the transporter finally arrives at the amusement district of the city. Night clubs, theatres, cinemas, everything you can think of when it comes to having fun. On the skyscrapers, advertisement monitors hang on the walls that update after a few minutes. New Neo-REVOCS clothes or wares for example. Propaganda in favor of the corporation. And as Senketsu notices quickly, Wanted-posters."

"Wanted: Ryuko Matoi... corporation defamation, multiple killings, destruction of corporation goods..." he reads slowly.

"What a bunch of idiots." Ryuko mentions.

"Indeed. Well, we arrived." Satsuki answers.

"Neat. So where are we heading anyway?" Ryuko asks curious.

"A club. Mikisugi and I talked about it a few days ago." Satsuki smiles excited.

"Sounds good. I could use some good music now." Ryuko answers excited. Satsuki chuckles.

"Sup?"

"Oh, nothing." she grins mischievous. What was her plan?

The group arrives at their destination and parks behind a little restaurant. Satsuki turns off the engine and opens the door carefully, looking out of it. Neon lights shine here. Combined with the heavy snow fall and wind, it makes up for a dense atmosphere. A Neo-REVOCS police car passes by the group but doesn't notice like that's it.

"Alright, we can move. Quick." Satsuki orders. Ryuko and Nui leave the car. They quickly follow Satsuki through the snowy streets. It's uncomfortable cold here. Satsuki definitely could use a coat now. However, they arrive at the club Satsuki talked about. She opens the red doors and enters the hall.

"Get in." Satsuki says stressed. Ryuko enters the hall, Nui takes a quick look at the club sign.

"Naked 24?" she mumbles confused and follows Satsuki and Ryuko.

The group arrives in a thirty steps deep stair hall that leads down into the building. Posters of movies hang at the walls, neon lights brighten up the room. Arriving at the end of the hall, they find an elevator. Satsuki opens it and the group enters the elevator. It looks clean and nice. The elevator seems to lead up to the actual club. Must be a good club, Ryuko thinks.

"A clean elevator. Damn, this'll be really cool." Ryuko says full of excitement, and Senketsu looks happy too. Satsuki grins and breathes out.

(The track for this scene is "Vixen Club OST" from HITMAN: Absolution. Listen to it while reading by searching it on YouTube. Oh yeah, it's that kind of club, guys. :D)

"Dude, why are you laughing?" Ryuko grins. Satsuki doesn't answer. The group can hear music in the background.

The elevator opens and the three women find themselves back in another little hall. Satsuki walks to the huge purple door.

"Seriously, Satsuki, why are you laughing like that?" Ryuko asks confused but smiles. Satsuki opens the door.

"I haven't told you what kind of club we are going to visit." Satsuki laughs and enters the room. Ryuko follows her. And then she see's what kind of club this is. Her mouth opens in disbelief. Senketsu is surprised.

"Oh boy..." he says.

"... are you fucking serious, Satsuki?"

"OH YES, A STRIP CLUB!" Nui screams happy and runs into the room. Ryuko looks around slowly and very shy. Dancers are on the poles, male and female, all of them almost naked. Red and purple lights shine everywhere, a few guests enjoy and drink a cold one or talk with each other, and there's also a barkeeper at the bar, talking with a few guests while giving out drinks. A little music station plays music for the entire club. Ryuko swallows down and needs a moment to comprehend where her sister dragged her into again. The carpet ground is dark blue and looks really nice and feels soft too. Nui runs to the dancers and watches them excited. Satsuki walks calmly and proud through the club, passing the dancers. Ryuko however is still at the entrance and looks confused, unsure about what to do.

"Se-Senketsu?"

"Just keep moving and follow Satsuki. Just... just follow Satsuki." he suggests. Ryuko nods unsure and slowly walks through the room. Everyone seems to have a lot of fun here - guests and dancers as well, and the mood here is really relaxed and fun. No one minds the look of the others. A young man with tight underwear walks towards Satsuki and talks with her from the looks of it. Ryuko meets up with Satsuki.

"Damn. Satsuki Kiryuin, that's sick. Haven't expected a visitor like you." the man answers surprised. Satsuki smiles.

"I haven't expected this either, but here I am. I wanted to take a look at this club anyway." Satsuki answers calm. Ryuko stays behind her big sister.

"And you seem to brought your sister with you as well. Cool. And who's that girl that is so crazy about my dancers?" he grins.

"... Nui Harime."

"... say again?"

"Don't worry, we make sure she won't harm anyone."

"Oh, it's alright, she seems like she has a lot of fun with my dancers."

"Mhm."

"Oh... my bad, apologies. Name's Arata, I'm the boss here. Welcome to the Naked 24. We're open 24/7, the only Nudist Beach hideout in Nagoya." Arata smiles proud and reaches his hand towards Satsuki. She shakes his hand. Arata has red, short hair, wears a little shoulder cover and black, tight underwear. He's rather skinny but has a few little muscles here and there. Nothing impressive, but looks fine. Arata seems to be rather chill.

"Well, your clothes do look really bad, what happened?"

"Let's not talk about it." Satsuki suggests. Arata nods.

"Aight, no problem."

"Is it possible that you could clean our clothes here? We want to move out tomorrow evening, we have to leave Nagoya soon. Neo-REVOCS searches us."

"It's cool, we can do that. You're safe here. Neo-REVOCS sometimes visits us but they only take a look at the public area and during night time, they don't send patrols. We got a few cool rooms in the back - clean, comfortable and warm, unlike the stupid weather outside. Almost caught a cold." Arata explains.

"Satsuki, can we leave?" Ryuko asks.

"Never!" Satsuki answers grinning.

"You asshole, you could have at least told me this is a strip club!" Ryuko gripes. Arata chuckles.

"Your face was priceless, I couldn't resist." Satsuki grins.

"Ryuko, correct? We got a second floor on your left, just walk up the stairs. You can only watch the dancers there if you sit at the fence in case you don't like to see naked bodies." Arata smiles. Ryuko notices the stairs above the toilets that shines purple. Nui laughs.

"HE TOUCHED MY NOSE!" Nui laughs happy. The dancer grins.

"Alright, honorable ladies, lemme show you the rooms real quick. Then you still have enough time to enjoy the time here if you like to." Arata smiles excited and turns around.

"Harime, come on!"

"Never, Satsuki! This is awesome!"

"You can touch as many boys and girls as you want in ten minutes. Besides, your dress still is messed up." Satsuki argues.

"Yeah, fair enough. Don't even think about running away, my boy." Nui smiles happy and walks away, with the dancer blinking towards her. The three move behind the bar and go through a door, arriving at a second room where the dancers can prepare themselves. A young man and a young woman talk with each other while getting ready for their performance. Both are almost completely naked.

"Oh lord..." Ryuko mumbles. Nui smiles. The group continues moving through a little hall and then walk up a few stairs, with rooms on the left and right side. Nui listens but nothing happens in there.

"Hey, redhead! Can we watch people having fun in the private rooms?" Nui asks curious.

"Nui!" Ryuko says shocked.

"Heh, only if the guests want to, but that never happened because we never have sexual intercourse here. This is still Nudist Beach after all. We are all naked, but not perverts. Well... mostly." Arata smiles. He opens a door that leads into a huge hall with several rooms.

"See, Ryuko? It's not as bad here as you think." Satsuki laughs.

"Eh..."

"Alright, here we are. In case of emergencies, we have some guest rooms prepared. We also have some Pyjamas. You can give me your clothes and I'll bring them to our little laundry in the room next to Ryuko." Arata suggests kind and points at the various rooms. Sleeping rooms, a laundry and a little living room with a small open kitchen and a TV.

"Pyjamas are in the cupboards. I'll wait here. Take any of the rooms." he continues and leans at a wall. Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui then take a room. Ryuko is amazed by the room she just walked into, and Senketsu is impressed too.

A nice carpet, red walls, a soft and comfortable looking bed, a small cupboard and a bathroom with a bathtub. Ryuko opens the cupboard and takes out a black pyjama, however, she puts it onto the bed first. Then she opens the bath room and looks into the mirror. Senketsu can see himself in it.

"I'll clean you up myself. I know you hate washing machines." she grins.

"How kind of you." he chuckles. Ryuko leaves the room again and see's Satsuki with a blue pyjama and Nui with a purple one. Both women give Arata their clothes.

"Sweetheart, if I find out my dress lost just a tiny bit of color, I'll take all of you dancers with me to the Nudist Beach base, alrighty?"

"Haha, yeah, sure, I'll keep it in mind." he answers chuckling and takes the clothes.

"Why do you still wear Senketsu?" Satsuki asks.

"I'll clean him up myself now. He doesn't like washing machines."

"I see. Lucky you." Satsuki grins and then gets punched on her shoulder by Ryuko for that.

"You'll always gonna make fun of me not liking strip clubs, do you?" Ryuko grins.

"We'll visit strip clubs every week now until you like them."

"Yeah right."

"Alright, ladies. Enjoy the evening, you seem like you had a rough day. There's a TV in the living room. We also have some food in the fridge you can cook up quickly, and well, if anyone of you guys want a drink or watch the nice view, you can of course visit the club. Drinks are free for you, since you are Nudist Beach allies." Arata explains and enters the laundry room. Satsuki decides to walk to the kitchen, Ryuko and Nui follow her quickly. The group makes a little meal consisting of fried rice and fish, then Satsuki and Nui leave the guest halls and go back to the club. Ryuko walks back into her room and locks the door, then she starts filling up the bathtub with water.

After enough foam and soap is in it, she takes off her clothes and jumps into the warm water.

Senketsu is surprised briefly after, as he's dragged into the tub without properly preparing himself, since he's not that much of a fan being completely soaked. Ryuko starts to clean him up carefully and without touching his eye, that might hurt him a bit. He's genuinely surprised about the warm water though.

"Huh, the water is nice." he reacts surprised.

"Mhm, it's pretty neat. At the very least, the temperature in it is better than in the Matoi mansion, I'll tell you."

"Really that bad?"

"Well, it could be worse. But this one's really good. And the soap is also neat."

"Mako's mother was always cruel to me when it came down to washing me." he chuckles.

"Oh yeah, I can still remember how shocked you were. "Please don't wash me there, that tickles! Aarrrrgh!" she laughs.

"Grrr." Senketsu grumbles ironic.

...

"Master Ichiro?" Masaru asks as he enters the presidential office. It's late evening, and the snow fall in Tokyo is strong too, if not as strong as in Nagoya. Ichiro rearranges a few books at a shelf right now.

"Masaru." he answers back calm while organizing.

"Our soldiers lost contact with Matoi, Kiryuin and Harime."

"They are in Nagoya most likely. I haven't had time to take a look, these cooking books are truly interesting."

"You starting to become a cook now?" Masaru asks with a light humorous tone. His boss doesn't react though.

"C-can I ask you to take a look at where they are at the moment? We could put more pressure on them this way."

Followed by that, Ichiro sits down onto the carpet in front of his desk and closes his eyes.

"Well, I'm curious as well." he says calm.

...

"Oh so now you're throwing water at me? Just you wait, Senketsu!" Ryuko laughs and throws water and foam against Senketsu who then dives down to avoid the attack.

...

Suddenly, Ichiro opens his eyes at incredible speed and swallows. He blushes slightly.

"What happened!?" Masaru asks confused.

"... it's maybe not the best time right now."

"Why, what...?"

"You should keep a woman's privacy to herself." he answers briefly and walks to his desk.

"WHAT!? IS SHE..." and then, Ichiro looks at Masaru with an shocked face expression.

"... actually, I don't want to know it." Masaru answers unsure. Ichiro nods very, very (!) slowly.

Fifteen minutes later, Ryuko leaves the bathtub freshly cleaned. Senketsu jumps around in the tub a bit and then is grabbed out by

Ryuko. She hangs him on the wall in the sleeping room so that he can dry out. Tired, Ryuko goes to bed and starts sleeping. Satsuki and Nui enjoy the evening a bit more in the Club, with Satsuki taking a good drink at the bar which she enjoys and Nui watching the dancers amazed and happy...

Day 7:

Gamagoori sits in his room and writes a little mail. Someone knocks on the door. The huge man stands up and opens it. It's Sanageyama, with his hands in his jeans pockets.

"Yo." Sanageyama greets cool.

"Hello, Uzu."

"What are you doing? Thought we wanted to train."

"Give me two more minutes. I need to finish something."

"And what?" he asks and enters the room, leaning onto a wall near the door, while Gamagoori goes back to his desk.

"I'm only writing a little mail to my parents. I've promised them to let them know how I'm doing. I don't want them to be worried."

"Aren't parents always worried?"

"Yes. But with this mail, I can take a part of their worries away."

"And what are you writing them? That you are working with a bunch of naked men and women to save the world? Again, might I add?" he grins. Gamagoori smiles very briefly.

"Man... been a long time since I saw my parents."

"Family is important, Uzu."

"Family... hm, twelve or thirteen years now... can't even remember their voices anymore."

"I'm sorry to hear that."

"No need to, big guy. I never understood well with my dad anyway."

"Isn't that horrible?"

"Why should it?"

"He is your father, and you are his son."

"Well... if one expects you to absolutely everything and you don't have time to rest or have fun, you'll start getting rebellious because you of course want to be free, like me. Doing my own thing. Just like Nonon, or Ryuko."

"But every rebellion ends sometime. There's always something new coming out of it. Sometimes good, sometimes bad." Gamagoori answers calm and finishes his mail. He stands up and looks at Sanageyama.

"You should maybe visit him someday. Maybe he changed. And if not, it made you a greater man than him."

"Hmm..." Sanageyama thinks silently. Gamagoori pats his left shoulder two times and then exits his room. Sanageyama licks his teeth slightly and then leaves the room.

"Yeah... maybe someday..."

...

"Satsuki, really, do I have to sit here?" Ryuko asks stubborn. Ryuko wears Senketsu, Satsuki her suit and Nui her dress. Both sisters sit at a table in the strip club. It's 5:50 PM right now.

"No. But you are not in the mood to sit in your room the entire time either, and me neither." Satsuki answers calm and looks around. Ryuko sighs.

"You're still shy when it comes to being naked, and that is alright. It's natural. But in a club like this, it's nothing weird. Besides, you're not the one who has to dance half naked." she smiles.

"Sure... but couldn't you still have just told me that we would visit a strip club?"

"No." Satsuki laughs and points at Nui.

"Besides, even Harime, who normally doesn't care for nudity and even prefers people to wear clothes loves it. If you see it this way, I did both of us a favor, because now she doesn't annoy us."

"Oh, great, really, our dad's murderer is not annoying for once." Ryuko shakes her head and looks to the dancers with all the braveness she has. Senketsu still is unsure where to look at. After all, he didn't even knew Strip clubs exists. Nui lays on a podest and looks up to the dancers, moving her legs back and forth. Briefly after, she stands up and walks to Ryuko and Satsuki.

"Satsuki!"

"Yes?"

"I love you! You knew that before, but this entire club full of naked idiots really made me laugh, and you even managed to annoy Ryuko yourself! I'm so proud of you!"

"Thanks, I suppose."

"Haha, I wasn't serious anyway. Being proud of you, that is. You're still weird."

"Of course. Forgive my stupidity, Harime."

"Apology accepted!" Nui says and sits down next to Ryuko, first with a huge gap, but slowly moving closer to her whenever Ryuko doesn't look at Nui, until she touches Ryuko's right arm. Ryuko notices how cold her arm is.

"Dude, piss off, you're cold like ice."

"Aww, Ryuko, I thought you like being close to Life Fibers! Look, you are one and you even wear that Kamui."

"Yeah, cause Senketsu is a normal person unlike you."

"I don't know, Ryuko, I find it very concerning having a piece of clothing as a friend!"

"And having a psychopath that is made out of clothing material is better?"

"I'm a psychopath?"

"No, of course not, I only made that up."

"You make up a lot of things, do you? Excuses for seeing sweet boys and girls! Or thinking your dad was..."

"You better be careful about what you say next." Ryuko threatens. Nui grins happily.

"So glad I can be with you guys." Nui answers. Satsuki interrupts the conversation.

"The beds are soft, that was surprising. And the clothes are well cleaned as well." Satsuki mentions to lead the conversation into a less bad direction.

"Whenever my clothes get dirty, I'll send them to this strip club now." Nui grins. Satsuki nods.

"So when are we going to leave again, Satsuki?" Ryuko asks impatient. Satsuki takes a look at the clock. Almost 6 PM.

"I suggest we go around 8 PM. Arata told me there would be a way to the roof. We could use the monorail above the club, we only have to get through another building that was rendered inactive. We can leave Nagoya with the monorail then, it would only take about 10 minutes. If we don't take a break, we can get to Hashima. It's pretty cold outside, Ryuko, I got ourselves some jackets. You don't need one, Harime, right?" Satsuki explains and asks Nui. Nui nods and leans back.

"Finally..." Ryuko mumbles.

...

"Now let's try this again." Ichiro talks to himself and drinks his cup of milk, then he sits down.

"They do have some good milk." he mentions satisfied and closes his eyes.

Senketsu looks around. First, he looks at Satsuki's eyes, then to Nui's eyes, then to the dancers, but only for a very short time, after all, he's not in the mood to see them.

"... and then he seriously ran onto the street completely naked, because she was so angry. I never experienced a more fun moment in my skyscraper. Then she threw a teddy bear at him." Satsuki explains and grins. Ryuko and Nui laugh. The club logo is visible behind the strip poles at the wall.

...

"MASARU!" Ichiro yells annoyed. Masaru slams open the office doors.

"Send Samurai and Ashigaru to the Naked 24 in Nagoya! Matoi, Kiryuin and Harime are there!"

"Naked 24?! The strip club?!"

"The strip club. I hate perverts! And get the needle copter ready, they'll try to flee. If they want to leave, they need to deserve their victory."

...

Hoomaru takes a look around in the old REVOCS base. She finds an old folder for the former administrator of this facility. It seems like the folder is a summary of the corporation hierarchy, starting with the janitors and the normal workers at the bottom of the page. Then, the administrators are next, people who manage the various factories and facilities REVOCS had. Whenever Ragyo had a speech, the administrators were present and loyal. The thirty years old woman that still looks like twenty five never fully left her ideals as REVOCS secretary behind which is why she sometimes faces herself with her past. It gives her a good feeling though, because it shows her she still grew out of it, and that she overcame the bad things Ragyo planned for the world. And Satsuki was a major influence about that. After the administrators, the Couturiers are next - these were Nui Harime's personal workers. They always worked in the stitching halls and produced only the most and best clothing REVOCS offered, while the normal workers produced everyday clothes.

Then, Satsuki Kiryuin follows. Even though Satsuki was never a major part of REVOCS, she did was able to command certain groups, at least to an extent and only if either Nui or Ragyo gave her the go for it. After Satsuki, Hoomaru herself follows - as secretary and Ragyo's left hand, she was allowed to command entire groups of employees or send helicopters and transport cars. And then, Nui Harime follows, as the right hand and Grand Couturier of REVOCS. As Grand Couturier, Nui also was vice president of REVOCS, unlike Satsuki which one could expect. Satsuki was the third in command, as Ragyo was more proud of Nui. It makes sense, since Nui was, or

still is, the superior life form. And only the strongest was allowed to be the CEO. Eventually, Ragyo follows, as CEO and president of REVOCS. Hoomaru shakes her head ashamed.

"Graduating from someone or something always sounds easy. Growing out of Ragyo's shadow... that's what you said, Ryuko Matoi... apparently, not everyone can grow out." Hoomaru sighs, looking at her portrait on the hierarchy. Shortly after, she looks at Nui. An interesting detail: Ragyo looks serious, yet proud and wonderful. Hoomaru seems to be like that as well but can't fully copy that expression, and Nui seems innocent as always.

"But if I can find redemption, everyone can..." she mumbles and sighs as she watches Nui and her own portrait.

"I hope I can get the chance to do the same with you, even if it might be foolish to think..."

...

New guests visit the strip club. Arata chatters a bit with Satsuki at the bar, while Ryuko is in the upper floor, looking around relaxed. She can't see the dancers from here, and the music is fine too. The group has finished their meal, and it's around 8:10 PM now. The monorail is prepared and ready.

"And you did told Mikisugi we would be here?" Satsuki asks to make sure. Arata nods.

"Yup. Told him y'all are doing good."

"Thank you."

"No problem. It was nice having you around here. You are always welcome."

"I'll keep it in mind. I'm not a huge fan of these "locals," but the music is fine and it has a nice vibe. My sister doesn't see it that way." she

smiles.

"Oh you know, once you got over the shame, it's all cool. It takes longer for others, and besides, I sometimes blush as well when we get a new dancer." Arata chuckles.

"Right."

Nui leaves the door next to the bar and throws Satsuki's bag towards her, and Ryuko's bag up to the floor above her, which Ryuko catches. She got everything ready, and the scissor blade box is with her as well.

"Your jackets are at the monorail. They should fit you well." Arata mentions.

"Very good."

"Probably cotton and polyester." Nui grins evil.

"Still better than Life Fibers, Life Fiber." he counters.

"Alright, time to release Ryuko from her suffering." Satsuki stands up and walks to the stairs.

"Dancers, I have to leave sadly, but let me touch every one of you once more! You guys are funny!" Nui laughs and jumps onto the podium, touching everyone's cheeks slightly. The dancers don't mind that and some find it funny, which Nui finds funny as well. Eventually, she arrives at the music station. CDs are here everywhere. Satsuki talks to Ryuko who makes some jokes with Senketsu right now.

"Your suffering ends now. We can leave."

"What, finally!"

"Arata told me we are always welcome. You should keep that in mind." Satsuki laughs and gets punched by Ryuko once more.

"Yeah right, shut up." Ryuko grins.

"Would be a nice view to see you visit this place."

"Mhm, never ever."

"And if I join you?"

"You don't like this place either."

"I haven't said that. I only said "These dancers are interesting to look at it in a rather fascinating way." Satsuki chuckles.

"Get into positions, Ashigaru. Access in 10."

Nui walks up to the music station and laughs happily at the worker.

"You make some great music!"

"Thanks, Life Fiber." the worker answers and continues, while Nui takes a look at the sound boxes. Ryuko and Satsuki walk down the stairs and meet up at the bar.

"And where's Nui now?" she asks annoyed and then notices Nui at the music station.

"Hey, Nui!" Ryuko yells and marches up to Nui annoyed, while Satsuki waits at the bar, taking a last look at everything.

Suddenly, the door opens, and Samurai as well as Ashigaru enter the club. Nui seems to keep the worker busy which annoys him obviously. The barkeeper next to Satsuki cleans up a few glasses. The Ashigaru walk through the club, holding their Katanas and Submachineguns ready, and then, they see Satsuki.

"Nui, would you move your fucking ass to the bar now!?" Ryuko screams annoyed.

"That's Kiryuin! Get her!" a Samurai yells. The Ashigaru open fire at the club, Satsuki jumps behind the bar surprised and draws her Katana. Bullets fly through the club, dancers jump off the pedestals and grab assault rifles that were below them, firing back at the Ashigaru. The Barkeeper puts down the glass and grabs, how else could it be, a shotgun from the desk and opens fire. Ryuko gets hit by an Ashigaru and jumps behind a pedestal, Nui gets hit three times and slams into a box at the music station, distorting the sound briefly. A clone leaves her pocket and starts a new track, then gets shot and shrinks again.

(The Track for this scene is "Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger" by Daft Punk. Listen to it while reading if you like to by searching it up on YouTube!)

"YOU CAN'T JUST HEAT THE SITUATION UP HERE, YOU JOKERS!" Nui yells annoyed and takes cover behind the music station, throwing a few more clones into the room. One dozen Ashigaru armed with Submachineguns and three Samurai start fighting against the dancers and the three women, with the Samurai slowly advancing while the Ashigaru provide cover fire. Glasses explode, sparks fly up as the lights are hit. Satsuki transforms her suit into the Wrath Regalia, Ryuko transforms into Senketsu Azami.

While the dancers shoot back, Ryuko and Satsuki try to advance as well, attacking the Samurai, with Nui firing her rifle that can devastate walls with enough hits. As she see's a Samurai that is about to attack Satsuki, she tries to hit a headshot, but the Samurai dodges in the last second and moves back behind a wall. He can't see Ryuko.

"That was close." he mumbles relieved and then is touched from behind. He turns around and see's Ryuko grinning at him.

"Yo, what's up?"

"Oh, oh." he reacts and gets punched into a strip pole by Ryuko's scissor blades. Satsuki attacks a few of the Ashigaru and can defeat

them, then notices a bullet hit her shoulder armor, letting her know she is focused right now. She quickly jumps back behind a cover.

"WELCOME TO THE NAKED 24, YOU IDIOTS!" a male dancer screams and starts firing with a machine gun. This bullet hell causes the room to lighten up with every shot. The dancer laughs happily evil, until suddenly the wall explodes and a group of Ashigaru-gunners becomes visible, shooting at him. They can kill him, but as he falls from the podest, he still hits three of the Ashigaru while falling down.

"That was my favorite dancer!" Nui gripes and fires at a neon sign above the Ashigaru. The sign falls down and buries the partially robotic enemies. Sparks appear. Ryuko rams the scissor blades onto the ground, causing shock waves made of life fibers to appear. They explode and the light they produce make more enemies visible. Ryuko get's shot once more, yet she is still able to fight without too many problems, although it's noticable that she gets weaker the more hits she sustains. The Anti-Life Fiber ammo seems to work against Ryuko, and probably against Nui as well. Satsuki gets behind the bar again as she see's Arata coming back.

"Satsuki! You and your group leave this place, we'll deal with these guys!"

"We can lurk them away. They want us, not you."

"Alright! Take the monorail and drive down the entire way, and over the Plaza of Nagoya, then you should arrive at the outskirts, we got a car ready there! Now go!" Arata orders. Satsuki nods grateful.

"RYUKO! HARIME! MOVE UP!" Satsuki yells. Nui proceeds to provide cover fire while leaving her cover, Ryuko moves back to the bar thanks to Nui's help. Quickly, Satsuki runs up to the guests hall, and at the end of the hall, there is a new door that was apparently hidden. Satsuki enters the door first, then Nui, then Ryuko, who barricaded the stairs that lead up the room by placing some furniture onto it.

After that, Satsuki runs through the empty hall above the club and kicks open the door that leads to the rooftop of the building. The club is in a higher floor than she would have expected. She looks down. Ten Neo-REVOCS transporters are at the entrance, and about 60 Ashigaru and Samurai are waiting outside. Spotlights enlighten the building and the walls.

"God damn it." she mumbles and then notices Ryuko and Nui arriving.

"I've barricaded the hall, we got a minute or two!" Ryuko mentions stressed while Nui looks down at the soldiers as well. The spotlights then notice Satsuki and Nui watching down, and briefly after, Ashigaru start firing at them.

"Not sure about that!" Nui reacts and reloads her weapon. Satsuki looks at an overpass that leads to the next building they have to get through to take the monorail. The group quickly runs to the overpass and enter the next building, which happens to be an office complex. On the other side of the huge complex is another open door. Bullets fly through the many windows of the dark building. Neo-REVOCS seems to have positioned Ashigaru-sharpshooters on the rooftops and windows on the other side, and in the background, the group hear's Samurai catching up with them.

"Get them!" the Samurai yells and points at them. Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui move from cover to cover while the latter tries to keep the Samurai off from catching them.

"Shoot down the overpass safety measures!" Satsuki orders. Nui then proceeds to aim at the safety measures that hold the overpass up and destroys them with two precise shots, causing the Ashigaru on it to fall down onto the street, with the Samurai figuring out a way to get to their targets now. Nui laughs. Satsuki starts moving up again, with Ryuko and Nui following her, and together, they can get out of the office complex, jumping down onto the next roof, about five meters deep. Advertisement monitors save the group from the sharpshooters, but not for long, as they start firing blind, and briefly

after, one of the monitors fall onto the street due to the immense damage they sustained. Falling from the roof would be pretty bad, as they are about 100 meters high. Arriving at the monorail, they find a few connected waggon ready. The monorail seems to lead through the entire city. Entering the waggon, Ryuko takes a look at the console panel, stressed and annoyed.

"Fuck, how does this thing work!?" she asks loud.

"Find it out, Ryuko, and do it quick!" Satsuki orders and watches how lights move a floor below them. Ashigaru hunt down the group and they are almost at the roof top. Ryuko starts randomly pressing buttons.

"Maybe the red one?" Senketsu asks. Nothing happens.

"Nope!"

"The green one!?"

"Still nothing!"

"Yellow!?"

"AHA!" she reacts relieved and hears the engine starting. Ryuko slams up the speed regulator. The waggon starts moving slowly and gets quicker. The intense snow fall makes it harder to see anything. The rails are slightly iced which makes it harder to drive the vehicle. As the Ashigaru arrive on the rooftop and open fire, the waggon drives away, with Satsuki and Nui taking cover.

"They shoot down their entire city to get us!" Senketsu comments surprised. Ryuko tries to control the waggon, but briefly after, they can hear another waggon following them. Satsuki peeks out of her cover and watches a group of Ashigaru getting closer to them with a waggon, all of them armed with Katanas.

"Here they are." she mumbles calm. Nui tries to aim but this task becomes nearly impossible due to the bad driving conditions.

"Arrrgh, I can't shoot them!"

"We can't allow them to get onto the waggon!" Satsuki orders. Nui gets back into cover and thinks quickly, then she gets an idea and raises her finger.

"Satsuki! Give me your gauntlet!" Nui grins. Confused, Satsuki reaches her hand towards Nui and then is grabbed by her. She takes Satsuki's strong hand.

"What are you planning?"

"I'm giving you a new toy." Nui chuckles and summons Life Fibers out of her fingers, with which she starts tailoring on Satsuki's gauntlet. The procedure hurts a bit. Ryuko and Senketsu look at the rails in front of them. Skyscrapers and amazing neon lights everywhere, the view would be fantastic if you wouldn't have a group of evil goons chasing you in the middle of a snow storm. Nui precisely stitches the Life Fibers together which suddenly disappear into Satsuki's gauntlet. She is done and claps with her hands happily.

"Now throw your weapon against these clowns!"

"What!?"

"Do it already! This is funny!" Nui laughs. Satsuki looks confused but then throws her Katana towards the Ashigaru, and suddenly, she's dragged away by it, as if she would have used a grappling hook. She reaches her Katana and pierces through the Ashigaru. Landing in the waggon, she starts fighting against the Ashigaru, with Nui laughing happily as her plan worked and Ryuko looking surprised, not knowing what just happened. Satsuki kicks off the remaining Ashigaru from the waggon who falls onto the street and on a Neo-REVOCS car, causing it to stop, and then, Satsuki throws her

Katana back at their waggon. The Katana pierces through the waggon armor and Satsuki is able to climb up.

"Good idea, Harime." Satsuki says impressed. Nui blinks.

The following Ashigaru waggons slam against the waggon Satsuki just cleared. They fall off the monorail. Satsuki and Nui give each other an high five. Ryuko looks back at them.

"We got them?!" Ryuko asks.

"We got them!" Satsuki answers satisfied and looks back. Ryuko grins.

"RYUKO!" Senketsu yells surprised.

"We're not done yet!" he mentions.

Ryuko looks forward, with her eyes increasing largely in shock. Satsuki and Nui look to the front of the waggon as well.

"WHAT THE FUCK!?" Ryuko screams.

"NEEDLE COPTER!" Nui yells, dragging Ryuko and Satsuki down as the Needle Copter opens fire with it's main machine gun. The Needle Copter is a heavy attack chopper produced by Neo-REVOCS to keep up the order in Nagoya. It's rotor blades remind heavily of needles you use as tailor. The armor seems to be pretty strong, and the bird looks impressive as well, with red and white colors everywhere. Two miniguns on the left and right side of the Needle Copter are attached as well. The doors open, with an Ashigaru opening fire with the Mini gun as the Needle Copter shows it's right side from the groups point of view.

"Ah fuck!" Ryuko reacts annoyed. The Mini gun stops firing after five seconds, cooling off. Nui quickly peeks out and tries to aim at the Ashigaru. Satsuki crouches to the control panel of the waggon and moves down the regulator a bit so that Nui can aim properly. She

tries to shoot the Ashigaru but misses, as the Needle Copter stops flying forward briefly.

"How annoying!" Nui reacts and shoots again, but misses once more, and then, the Ashigaru starts firing again, blasting off Nui's head. Nui dies temporarily and her rifle falls onto the waggon ground.

"Can you handle a rifle?!" Satsuki asks Ryuko stressed while controlling the waggon. Ryuko grabs Nui's rifle and aims. Blood leaves Nui's neck, but the Life Fibers slowly regenerate again.

"Is this thing even loaded?!" Ryuko wonders and looks at the ammo clip. Two rounds left.

"Time to find out if I'm a good sharpshooter or not..." Ryuko mumbles and aims. Then, she fires the rifle, but is pushed away by the immense recoil and slams into the wall behind her. The minigun opens fire again, Ryuko and Satsuki take cover. The waggon starts losing balance, moving around left and right but still driving on the rails good enough. As the mini gun stops, Satsuki looks out again and raises the speed. The waggon drives through a little gap inside a skyscraper and through a tunnel, and on the other side, the Plaza of Nagoya is visible, which means they aren't far away from the exit anymore. Two kilometers away, the walls are located. Ryuko tries to aim again and just as she is about to fire, the weapon is touched and moves up, missing the Needle Copter. Ryuko looks back and see's Nui's head regenerating.

"Nice shot." Nui grins.

"Are you fucking serious!?"

"I am." she grins and points at the Needle Copter. Ryuko looks at it and notices she hit an antenna. The antenna falls down onto the Needle Copter, causing it to fling away. The bird is not destroyed, but at least they got some distance now.

"I haven't said anything." Ryuko reacts and gives Nui her rifle back. The relieve doesn't hold on long though, as Ashigaru are audible below them, and as Satsuki looks down, she can see a field cannon aiming at the rails.

"These pigs!" she reacts and watches the field cannon shooting the rails, destroying them. The waggon disconnects from the rails and flies down into a skyscraper below the rails. Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui hold onto some poles in the waggon, but as the waggon lands, everything goes dark for Ryuko.

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(The Track for this scene is "Zenhan Saishuuroku gata" from KILL la KILL. Listen to it while reading by searching it up on YouTube if you like to!)

Ryuko coughs.

"Satsuki?" Ryuko says worried and looks around. The waggon landed in the first floor of a apartment complex and is now in an dark entrance hall.

"You alright, Senketsu?" Ryuko asks and climbs out of the waggon. No sign of Satsuki or Nui. She stumbles around the area.

"I'm okay." he answers. His friend nods and walks through the entrance hall, and then, she can see the remains of a dead clone which means at least Nui was here. Suddenly, she is dragged away into a dark corner. It was Satsuki, with Nui keeping Satsuki's back free.

"Quiet." Satsuki orders. Ryuko nods and watches flashlights moving through the building, and hears steps.

"They have to be here!" a Samurai yells. Five Samurai investigate the hall and walk past them. Satsuki carefully sneaks away, Ryuko and Nui follow her, with Ryuko holding her blades ready and Nui aiming at the Samurai should they turn around. The group leaves the entrance hall and arrive near the Plaza of Nagoya. There is a huge fountain with a sculptur of Ragyo Kiryuin. Behind it, the biggest factory of Neo-REVOCS is located - the main manufacture.

"Oh, look at that, the main manufacture, good old times." Nui chuckles. There are Ashigaru soldiers everywhere, and at the entrance, armed vehicles protect the entrance. The Needle Copter still flies around in the background. Via ladders you can climb up little overpasses on the left and right side of the street. Satsuki figures out a plan quickly and notices a Neo-REVOCS car that is open and badly protected. Ryuko and Nui watch out for incoming enemies.

"Listen up. There is an open Neo-REVOCS car. We'll take it, but we have to surprise them, otherwise we have no chance. Ryuko, you go onto the street and tell our friends a nice story. Harime, you climb up the overpass on our right, I'll take the opposite one. We'll flank them. Ryuko then uses the distraction to steal the car and picks both of us up." Satsuki explains.

"Funny, I wanted to climb up anyway." Nui smiles.

"Good." she responds. Ryuko nods and waits for Satsuki and Nui to climb up the overpasses. As both her companions are ready, Ryuko figures out something mean quickly.

"Got any idea, Ryuko?" Senketsu asks excited.

"I do, just wait." she says and stands up, walking towards the Ashigaru and commanding Samurai, while Nui aims at them and Satsuki getting behind them. About twenty Ashigaru wait at the Plaza itself, and around it, there are about one hundred more. They have to be quick, as they can't win a battle against an huge amount of Ashigaru like that due to their new ammo. Satsuki gives a thumbs up towards Ryuko. She nods and holds both scissor blades ready,

walking towards her enemies and then ramming them down onto the ground, leaning onto them uppish.

"What's up, you clowns?" Ryuko yells grinning. The Ashigaru aim at Ryuko, and the Samurai hold their Katanas ready. One of them walks forward.

"Before you start shooting up this place, lemme talk real quick, I have something interesting to tell y'all!"

"Speak up, Matoi!" the Samurai orders.

"Alright, alright, listen to this. What's your name?"

"Hirata." the Samurai answers in distrust.

"Hirata, huh? Neat name, I had an colleague at work who had the same name, cool guy, a bit stupid, but cool. Hirata, I have a huge problem and I could use the help of you and your weird friends. You know that feeling when you are hunted down by the goons of an evil circus clown like Ichiro Harime which causes you to work with your sister and an crazy psychopath because it's the only way you could have a chance against said circus clown?"

No answer. The Ashigaru look at each other confused.

"What are you talking about, Matoi?" Ichiro asks himself confused.

The Samurai puts off his helmet. He's clearly confused.

"What?" he asks.

"Well it pisses me off. See, I have a few pretty bad days behind me, my school got shot up, I have to work with a psychopathic wannabe clown and now you shoot up a strip club too. Would it be cool for you guys if I take that nice looking car over there?"

"No?"

"See, of course not. I'm just trying to point out a weakness in your system. The thing is: if you have a car, you gotta protect it properly, I'm sure we can agree to that. It would be a shame if my sister and the clown would steal that car because you haven't protected it. Theoretically, it would be pretty bad too if my sister would stand right behind you and the clown would aim at you from the overpass on my right side. And imagine she would start shooting you and Satsuki would attack you too now. That would be really fucked up, right, Nui?" Ryuko chuckles. Nothing happens.

"THAT MEANS YOU SHOULD START SHOOTING THEM, YOU IDIOT!" Ryuko yells. Nui laughs and opens fire, Satsuki punches away a Samurai in front of her who wasn't aware of her. She proceeds to attack the Ashigaru, while the Samurai Ryuko talked to is confused. Ryuko attacks said Samurai and performs Sen-I-Soshitsu on him, causing him to fly into the air, spinning around and getting naked, landing in the cold snow. After that, Ryuko quickly runs to the car and enters it, opening the hatch on the roof. Nui jumps into the hatch, and then, Ryuko drives next to Satsuki who throws her Katana at the car. She climbs into the car while Ryuko drives away from the plaza.. Ryuko packs the scissor blades into the back of the car.

"It would make everything so much fucking easier if I could shrink the blades again!" Ryuko gripes.

"Calm down, Ryuko! Your blood is pretty spicy right now!" Senketsu mentions.

"Aight, aight!" she reacts. With high speed, Ryuko drives through the streets of Nagoya, while Nui shoots out of the car via the hatch. There is a roadblock in front of them, which causes Ryuko to panicly turn the car to the right, almost letting Nui fall out of it, but she can still hold herself in. Sirens are audible in the background.

"This stupid car!" she mocks angry. Nui shoots at the wheels of a Neo-REVOCS car and lets it collide with another one behind them,

causing it to explode due to the intense speed and the engine damage. Nui laughs evil.

"Good work." Satsuki reacts.

The group arrives at the city walls.

"CLOSE THE GATES!" a Samurai yells. The gates start to close. Ryuko drives with full speed through the roadblock at the gate, causing the car to sustain damage. She quickly decides to use the stairs next to the gate as a ramp and flies into the air with the car, while Nui shoots the petrol tank of a car, causing an huge explosion so that the chasing Neo-REVOCS can't get through the roadblock anymore. The explosion also causes a shockwave that makes their car even quicker, and so, the group flies over the burning roadblock in the last second before the gate closes. The Ashigaru-gunners on the walls start shooting at the group but miss the shots, and the spotlights are unable to follow the group as they drive up the highway. Leaving Nagoya, the snow storm becomes even stronger, but just as they thought the battle is over, all three notice how the Needle Copter catches up with them, firing with rockets at them.

"THIS FUCKING HELICOPTER!" Ryuko screams angry and tries to dodge. Nui can only hit the armor of the Needle Copter.

"Drive into the forest, we need cover!" Satsuki orders and looks out. Ryuko turns to their right and drives through the field until they arrive in a forest. Hills are everywhere, but she can't see them properly due to the dark.

"Where the fuck are we?!" Ryuko asks Satsuki stressed.

"I know this area a bit, this is near the Kiryuin-Manor!" Satsuki answers. The helicopter continues to shoot rockets at them but misses, and so, it flies above them and shows it's left flank to them, allowing the Mini gun to start shooting. Trees get destroyed, snow whirls up, fire incites. The car sustains more and more damage and

the engine starts to stutter, and then, Ryuko is hit around her belly area. She bleeds heavily.

"Argh, he got me!" Ryuko reacts angry. As Satsuki see's the blood spilling out of Ryuko, she gets furious and climbs out of the car.

"Now I'm angry." Satsuki mumbles quiet and meets up with Nui on the car roof while the Mini gun cools off. Satsuki aims and then throws her Katana against the Needle Copter, actually piercing the Ashigaru. Satsuki is dragged into the Needle Copter and destroys the Mini gun, then proceeds to fight through the Ashigaru and the pilots. Ryuko meanwhile slams the car against a tree as she can't concentrate properly since her wound needs to regenerate, and because the car is badly damaged anyway. The engine starts burning, Ryuko and Nui jump out and land in the thick snow. Both arch enemies can see how Ashigaru fall out of the Needle Copter, and then, the Needle Copter starts swinging down, landing into a few trees, breaking into two parts. The back part of the helicopter explodes, and the cockpit starts burning. Fire incites as the helicopter parts land on the ground. Ryuko and Nui walk a few steps back as the helicopter explodes.

"SATSUKI!" Ryuko screams worried. However, Ryuko's worries are defeated quickly once she see's Satsuki's Silhouette in the fire. She slowly walks out of the crash site, looking serious and cool. Nui grins evil.

"Hahaha! Satsuki's a badass." she mentions impressed. Satsuki has a little burn on her torso area and some blood and ash on her face, but other than that, she's fine. She meets up with Ryuko and Satsuki.

"Problem solved." she reacts cool. The snow storm is pretty strong here, the group can't see much.

"And where the fuck are now?" Ryuko asks.

"Somewhere close to the Kiryuin Manor and therefore near the Ibuki-Mountain."

"Somewhere's good."

"We should find a hideout quickly." Satsuki suggests. Then, Nui reacts.

"Follow me." Nui says suddenly and walks forward. Confused, Ryuko and Satsuki follow her through a huge snow path that leads up to the mountain until they arrive at a little old hut. Nui kicks open the door and enters the hut. The room is big enough for three people. An old cabin, it seems. There is a chimney with some wood, a bed, a few blankets, an arm chair... nothing special. There is however a huge desk with several tools for tailoring... and a sewing machine with a weird red color, as Senketsu notices.

"How do you know this place, Nui?" Ryuko asks confused and looks around. Nui hesitates. She doesn't give an answer. Ryuko and Satsuki try to get comfortable while Nui walks towards the desk with the sewing machine, moving her hand onto it. She then touches the little red color on it. It disappears in her finger. The snow is pretty strong outside and howls.

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Then, she grabs an old tool of her's from her dress pocket.

It's a measuring tape...

AN: I hope you liked the finale of this pretty long chapter. If I would have wrote down the entire chapter in one part like the others, it would have had about 29.000 words! Splitting it up was a good idea. ^^ We'll see us again in the next chapter. We will get a look at the younger Satsuki again, as well as a younger Nui Harime! This is gonna be really interesting - oh, and probably the darkest of all the chapters that came out so far. You'll like it, I'm sure of it. :) Alright,

have a great day and thanks for reading up to this point of the story.
Glad to have y'all here, I really am.

And as a little teaser, the next chapter is called "Behind The Curtain."

A Heart, Thrown Away Like Trash

AN: Welcome back to a new chapter of Shadows of Our Past. This chapter can be disturbing at some points - I also had to change a scene entirely as in the original version it was pretty heavy. I do hope you enjoy the chapter nonetheless, and the next one will be more comfortable to read, buuuut I'll tell y'all straight up: there will be more heavy stuff. At least two more chapters that will have the same dark tone like this one. You'll see it when we come to this point. For now, enjoy reading. You could turn on some kind of "Rain ambience" sound while reading as it will be raining the entire chapter. :) Have fun now!

(The track for this scene is "Madison Paige Theme." You'll hear this song probably a few more times. I highly suggest you listen to it while reading, it fits very well to this entire opening.)

A thunder rings out. Outside, the rainfall is extraordinary strong. A clock ticks in the background. Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock. And then, noticable loud and light steps sound up. It's getting dark outside.

"Harime, you're staring out of the window for more than two hours already. You should go back to your room. Your meal is getting cold." Hoomaru orders the little, thirteen year old Nui. Nui stands in front of a huge window wall. Outside is a large forest, and on the far end of it, the lights of Nagoya are visible. The little girl looks up to Hoomaru. Nui wears a nice white dress with a yellow bowtie on her neck, and there is a yellow belt that tighten up the dress so that it fits even better. And she also has little ponytails on her left and right that reach up to her shoulders. Hoomaru wears her usual white suit.

"You are stupid, Hoomaru." Nui answers sassy. Hoomaru ignores the comment and walks up next to Nui, looking out of the window like her.

"I like rain. It just falls on the ground. It really is strong." she mumbles and smiles slightly.

"Me too. Rain can be comfortable to look at. Where I come from, there is almost no rain. Only the desert." Hoomaru reacts. Nui looks up to Hoomaru.

"So that's why you are so boring?"

"No. Now go up and get your meal before Mr. Kuroido finds out you stand here. Kuroido doesn't like you."

"Kuroido is fat and ugly." she answers stubborn. Steps are audible behind them, above the floor on a overpass three meters above them. Hoomaru and Nui are in the living room of the huge Kiryuin-Manor. The fences of the overpass are made out of glass. The living room has a huge TV, a couch, flowers, a drawing of Satsuki and Nui, shelves and other usual stuff you can find in these rooms. Two halls on the upper left and right corner connect the living room with the entrance hall of the manor. The fourteen year old Satsuki is on the overpass. Satsuki wears a white sailors uniform with blue stripes. She looks down to Hoomaru and Nui briefly.

"Hoomaru?" Satsuki asks precisely and calm.

"Yes, Lady Satsuki?" she answers and looks up to the daughter of her CEO.

"I'm expecting my mother for an hour already. When will she arrive?"

"Your mother should arrive at home in a few minutes."

"Thank you." Satsuki answers and walks away.

Briefly after, Ragyo's loyal servant and butler Takiji Kuroido walks into the living room. Hoomaru looks at him with an slightly annoyed face expression. She doesn't like Kuroido either. The sinister servant looks at Nui and walks up to her.

"Lady Harime! Wasn't it clear enough that I told you this morning you are not allowed to linger in the living room, not even with your oberservant, Miss Hoomaru?! I heard in the other room Miss Hoomaru ordering you to go back to your room. If Miss Hoomaru orders you to do something, you will obey to her!" the evil Kuroido threatens and drags Nui to her. Nui punches his arm.

"Don't touch me, you are ugly and you smell!" Nui reacts disgusted and chuckles then.

"Go to your room. Now! Otherwise, the Director will be very angry!" he continues. Hoomaru walks in front of Nui and speaks up.

"I'm afraid that you have forgotten that Lady Ragyo does not care for your hate towards Nui Harime. Yes, Nui is a very mean girl and she does a lot of stupid things, HOWEVER: YOU are not entitled to speak up for Lady Ragyo! Now go and work!" Hoomaru orders evil. Kuroido grins ugly.

"You should be careful with your words, Miss Hoomaru." he threatens and walks out of the room. Hoomaru shakes her head in disgust.

"We can agree that this man is annoying, yes?" Hoomaru asks Nui. Nui nods.

"Yes. You're still dumb though." Nui smiles.

"Right. Now please, go back to your room. Your food is getting cold." Hoomaru asks. Nui smiles as a reaction.

"Well... if you ask so kindly, I'll do it just for you." Nui smiles and dances away quickly, leaving the living room via the hall in the upper right corner. Hoomaru then sighes.

"If it wouldn't be for your... tendencies." she mumbles annoyed and watches Nui entering her room in the second floor, which is near the overpass and visible from the window wall Hoomaru stands next to.

Hoomaru then walks through the various halls of the giant manor. A huge entrance hall connects the entire manor with the various rooms - an incredibly large kitchen with dozens of fridges where servants work, connected with an likewise huge dining room and of course the two halls that lead to the living room. Two steps, built like a half circle, lead up to the second floor. They are next to the two halls that lead to the living room. The living room leads to the huge garden which is connected with the forest, and there is a little hall made out of window walls that lead to a fairly huge tower - it serves as a relaxing space for Ragyo or Satsuki, and it's also the place where Satsuki's personal servant Soroi works and lives. Lastly, the living room and the second floor both have a connection to the huge bath halls.

The building also has besides the second floor, where Satsuki, Nui and Ragyo's sleeping rooms are, also a third floor that leads to Ragyo's personal office in the manor. And this is "just" the main building of the entire complex - the Kiryuin manor is 2x2 kilometers huge, due to the primordial life fiber residing under the manor which however only a few people are aware of, like Ragyo, or Nui. Kuroido lives in a different part of the manor, just like the many other servants and guards that are allowed to live here. Hoomaru also has an own room which is on the other side of the manor. She has an own little house with two rooms. The walls of the manor and the interior are rather minimalistic, however, the things that are in the manor are impressive to say the very least. Red and white colors everywhere, and in the halls that lead to the living room, there are even little showcases with various nice flowers, like roses, or even thistles.

Hoomaru enters her office in the third floor next to Ragyo's office which is far larger though. It's pretty much everything you can need in an office, folders, a desk, a chair and so on, and a nice view onto the street and the parking lot of the manor. Working on a few folders, Hoomaru searches for a certain document, and eventually, she finds it.

"Ah, there it is. The certificate of ownership for the island of Honnô." she says quietly to herself. Hoomaru puts the certificate aside and continues cleaning up her office a bit, until she hears a limousine parking. Servants walk up to the limousine, all armed with umbrellas. They walk to the door at the limousine and hold up their umbrellas. One of them opens the car door. A light shines slightly out of it, fighting the darkness of the evening, since it's 6:30 PM. And then, Ragyo Kiryuin leaves the car, wearing a black coat, and under that, a robe with white colors that shines below it. Hoomaru quickly goes back to the entrance hall and takes out her pilot glasses, which she always does when she talks or see's Ragyo. The servants take off her huge and beautiful looking coat as she enters the manor. Ragyo looks around with an calm, but cold face expression, while Hoomaru walks to her, carefully.

"Lady Ragyo..." Hoomaru greets in an calm and submissive way.

"Hoomaru." Ragyo reacts ice cold.

"I've put the contracts regarding Shimazu Inc. in a new folder as you wished. I also searched up the certificate of ownership for the island of Honnô since you wanted to take a look at it again." Hoomaru explains. Ragyo nods and walks up the stairs. Hoomaru follows her.

"May I suggest that we build a few more factories on Honnô? We could also build some kind of stadium for fashion shows."

Ragyo doesn't react. She appears rather apathic about Hoomaru's suggestions.

"Your daughter, Lady Satsuki, wanted to talk with you as well." Hoomaru continues. Ragyo stops all of a sudden and nods slowly.

"I will be available in ten minutes. She can meet me at the observation tower." Ragyo orders calm, yet resolve and cold.

"Of course, Lady Ragyo." Hoomaru answers and walks up to Satsuki's room while Ragyo walks to her quarters. They must be

pretty large... at least that's what Hoomaru assumes.

Satsuki sits in her room. A huge, impressive room with a white bed, other than that however it appears rather calm and minimalistic. What is noticable though is that there are a lot of sketches and papers on the desk in the room, as well as a blade resting next to the desk - it's Bakuzan. Satsuki hears Hoomaru knocking on the door and opens it.

"Hoomaru?"

"Your mother has arrive. You are allowed to talk with her in ten minutes. She will wait at the observation tower."

"I see. Thank you." Satsuki answers and closes the door. Hoomaru turns around and walks next to Nui's room. The door is slightly open. Hoomaru decides to take a little peek and see's Nui sitting on her desk, writing or drawing something apparently. She is definitely working with a pen at the moment. Looks like Nui enjoys whatever she is doing. Hoomaru knocks at Nui's door. Nui looks to the door and see's Hoomaru. She doesn't give an answer and continues. Hoomaru looks around briefly.

Nui's room is rather cute and playful. A lot of soft little puppets lay around, with one of them being actually her. Little scarfs and gloves hang at the wall, and they do look really good. There is also a stitching machine in the room with a dress the little girl started. Hoomaru see's how Nui draws a little image of stickmen hurting each other, and one of them laughs at the other. There are also open books with foreign languages - Hoomaru recognizes them as french, german, and italian. She grabs the french book. Vocabularies everywhere. Nui seemed to learn a few new words apparently.

"Not bad, Nui." Hoomaru compliments Nui and smiles. Nui looks up to Hoomaru with a confused face expression.

"As if I take compliments from you." Nui reacts uppish and smiles, then she continues.

"Tzz... you and your big mouth. With a behaviour like that, you will have huge problems in your life." Hoomaru answers.

"What do you know? Go away and talk with the fat Kuroido. Or annoy Satsuki."

"I know a lot, young Lady."

"Leave my room if you have nothing special to say, silly." Nui says mean. Hoomaru closes Nui's french book and lays it down next to her.

"You could at least thank me for protecting you against Kuroido's annoying breath."

"Nope." Nui answers. Hoomaru sighs and leaves the room, closing the door carefully.

"Shouldn't think so high of herself." Hoomaru mumbles to herself and goes back to her office to continue working.

Ten minutes later, Satsuki leaves her room and walks with calm steps outside into the garden, marching under the window roofs that lead to the observation tower. Two servants open the door for Satsuki, who then enters the building. The light here is strong. The fourteen year old Satsuki walks up the tower and passes by Soroi's little room. There is barely any space in the room, as she notices. Satsuki shakes her head and walks up until she arrives in the observation room of the about 20 meter high building. Rain slams against the window walls of the observation room from which you can see the entire manor really well, as well as the forest that surrounds it and the skyscrapers of Nagoya and the walls that are still under construction. The room is rather empty - a huge arm chair, a few flowers, a few portraits of Satsuki and, or Ragyo and a little table with a cup of warm tea for Ragyo. Soroi and Ragyo are in the room, with Ragyo looking outside and Soroi cleaning up the room quietly. As he see's Satsuki, he bows briefly before her and then greets her.

"Lady Satsuki." Soroi says.

"Hello, Soroi." Satsuki answers and nods. Satsuki looks outside the window to take a look. There are helicopters flying above Nagoya at the moment.

"An impressive view, isn't it, my child?" Ragyo asks Satsuki.

"Indeed."

"All these humans that live in Nagoya... victims of their own urge and addiction to clothing."

"Disgusting." Satsuki answers to play along.

"I agree. You wanted to talk with me?"

"Yes, Mother. Thanks for taking your time."

"What is it that your resolved heart bids?" Ragyo asks calm.

"I've put up my mind about Honnô island. I've heard you and Hoomaru talking about it every once in a while. I... have an idea that will benefit the corporation." Satsuki explains. Ragyo looks down to her little daughter and with an interested face expression.

"So young, and already interested in the corporate business... admirable. Speak up."

"I asked Hoomaru for some information regarding the corporation. REVOCS is beloved by adults and older people, however there is a huge deficit with the... younger consumers, like me."

Ragyo nods slowly. Her ice cold look is normal for Satsuki, but other people could be scared off by that cold hearted look.

"If we can convince younger people into buying our clothes, REVOCS sooner or later will benefit from it and become the Number One corporation in the clothing industry. The concept I have is

simple, yet effective. Imagine REVOCS founding an academy, a... school, that focuses on Life Fiber research and strength. A school in which the value of a single student is displayed by their uniforms. Uniforms that reward their wearer, given out only to the best, smartest and strongest. By that, we can find potential candidates for experiments, and most importantly, gain new members for the corporation that have a remarkable synchronization rate when it comes to Life Fibers." Satsuki explains. Ragyo thinks briefly to find words.

"And the name of the academy?"

"Honnouji-Academy." Satsuki reacts and waits patiently for an answer. Ragyo slowly walks through the room, thinking.

"Honnouji-Academy..." she mumbles.

"Yes. Since your goals were always about spreading Life Fiber clothes around the world and less about the satisfaction of the customers, I suggest we develop a concept that rewards strong students and cull out the weak."

Ragyo nods slowly.

"Out of all the ideas Hoomaru and the vermin that my administrators are, it is your idea that is so surreal and exciting that it could make sense thinking about it. You seem very convinced about it?"

"I am. I have dozens of concept sketches and textes done in my room. They all contain information about possible designs, a hierarchy, the interior and so on and so forth. Constructing the school would take a while of course, and a lot of money, but we have more than enough, as far as I can judge."

"We do..." Ragyo answers and walks to Satsuki.

"I like your enthusiasm, even if it appears a bit naive in your age... however, I cannot speak away a certain originality... and the interest

is present from my side. Show me your "concepts" tomorrow in my office. Then we will see. Hoomaru can help you sort them if you wish to."

"Yes, mother. Thank you." Satsuki answers submissive. Suddenly, the door to the observation room opens and a badly mooded Mr. Kuroido enters the room. Ragyo looks at him with an cold look. Satsuki and Soroi look at him.

"Lady Ragyo, Lady Harime causes an enormous amount of trouble once again, I, no, we can NOT allow this anymore. Since Lady Harime will not obey to my orders, I'm afraid that I have to ask you to deal with her." Kuroido explains annoyed and disgusted about his own words, as he is not able to control a little girl.

"This is the ninth time in three days that Harime causes trouble." Soroi comments. Ragyo walks away from Satsuki.

"It shall not be your mistake, Kuroido, as Harime, while a young girl, has... special needs which you cannot comprehend. Follow me." Ragyo answers and leaves the tower with Kuroido. Soroi and Satsuki look at each other.

"How do you feel today, Lady Satsuki? I haven't seen you up to this point."

"I'm alright, Soroi, thanks for asking. Would it be too much of a trouble if you could bring me a tea before I go to bed?" she bids Soroi. Soroi nods.

"Of course, young Lady Satsuki."

"Ah... one more thing. You mentioned that you wanted to visit your nephew? Shiro Iori, wasn't it?"

"Yes, that is correct."

"I will be at home around the evening again. Kuroido and the other servants will keep the manor clean. I allow you to visit him tomorrow."

"Thank you, Lady Satsuki." Soroi answers grateful. Satsuki follows Ragyo and Kuroido briefly after who already left the tower.

Meanwhile, Ragyo and Kuroido see Hoomaru trying to deal with Nui once again.

"You will not destroy the TV just because you didn't liked the meat!"

"I prefer fish, I always did! How can these silly cooks seriously expect me to eat their meal if it's not one I like?" Nui answers stubborn and smiles.

"I apologize that the cooks haven't cooked the right thing for you, however, as your personal observant, it is my duty to at least make sure that you will not destroy anything. Destroy the TV and you will experience the consequences which I do not want you to experience." Hoomaru explains.

"Oh look, the little Hoomaru pretends to like me! Haha! You are funny." Nui smiles. Then, Nui and Hoomaru hear Ragyo's heel click and instantly look up to her.

"Hello, Lady Ragyo!" Nui smiles happy. Ragyo looks at Nui with a cold face.

"You seem to cause trouble again, Nui?" Ragyo asks.

"Trouble?! Uh, uh! The others are just real fun brakes! Hoomaru is always super serious, Kuroido is fat and ugly and Satsuki is boring and ignores me! That is so mean! All I want is to watch the rain falling down and looking down to Nagoya! It looks so fun over there!" Nui smiles although some frustration is clearly audible.

"Nagoya..." Ragyo mumbles.

"Kuroido. Bring me a parasol." Ragyo orders her servant who then walks out of the room with an despicable ugly grinning. Hoomaru waits at the wall and leans at it.

"This burning passion and curiosity that lives inside and defines your character is admirable. You want to spread out your wings. See the world with your own eyes. I understand." Ragyo explains, with Nui nodding curious, while Hoomaru constantly switches her look between Ragyo and Nui. Kuroido comes back with a nice pink parasol. He gives the parasol to Ragyo, who then looks at it.

"However... curiosity can lead to the death of a predator like you." Ragyo continues and gives Nui the pink parasol carefully. Nui's eyes shine brightly as she investigates it, and then she smiles happy.

"This is my gift to you. Your own parasol. It will serve as your haven for this cruel, strange world we live in. Do not trust humans, do not talk with them, and do not show the few emotions that reside in you, for emotions make us weak. Your parasol will protect you, and you will protect the parasol. A pure, perfect being like you shall not be stained by the environment of this disgusting world." Ragyo explains.

"Lady Ragyo..." Nui mumbles grateful as she looks at the parasol.

"Nagoya, it is, yes?"

Nui nods.

"Then go. This world wants to be discovered by you. However, soon, it will show you that this world will only allow the strongest to live. Whatever happens out there... you will rise up and fight, for this is the purpose you have been born for. You serve me... and then only yourself. And now... go. Protect your parasol. It will protect you." Ragyo explains, and following up, Kuroido opens the window wall doors. Rain falls into the room. Happily, Nui walks outside and opens the parasol. She looks back at Ragyo once more and waves at her kindly, then she walks into the forest. Kuroido closes the door again, awaiting Ragyo's orders. Hoomaru looks at Ragyo.

"If I am allowed to ask... what was the purpose of sending out Nui to Nagoya?" Hoomaru asks confused.

"Kuroido." Ragyo says and looks to him.

"Give Harime one hour to get to Nagoya and take a look at the city. Then send a group of men. Tell them to kill her." Ragyo orders ice cold. Hoomaru raises her eyebrows. Kuroido grins sinister and rubs his hands, then leaves the room. Satsuki enters the room via the second floor and looks down from the overpass.

"That is an... interesting idea." Hoomaru answers, not sure what to think of it.

"The idea is to trigger Harimes latent psychopathic tendencies."

"I see."

"Harime was born as a tool and she shall serve as such. I cannot use her if she stands around and does nothing except causing trouble. By this, Harime will be motivated to cause even more, and with a few words here and there, she will obey my every order, even if I tell her to sacrifice herself for the greater good." Ragyo explains and leaves the room with Hoomaru. They seem to walk back to their offices again. Satsuki looks disgusted to Ragyo who didn't noticed Satsuki's presence.

"Disgusting whore." Satsuki thinks and walks back into her room. She continues working on her sketches while hearing the strong rain outside.

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"Ooooooh, a frog!" Nui smiles and watches a frog jumping around. She kicks him away, and so, the frog rolls down the hill she is trying

to walk up. The kick wasn't too hard though, seems like the frog is still doing fine but it's mean nonetheless. Then, Nui continues walking through the deep forest of Nagoya, with only a few paths around to get a slight orientation of where to go. Bushes and trees are everywhere, but her sweet parasol protects her from the strong rain. Sure, her lower dress gets a bit soggy but that is totally okay for her, as long as her hair isn't stained, everything is alright. Nui is just happy to walk around freely. She spent her entire life in the manor, the REVOCS-HQ or in the main manufacture of Nagoya. There was never a chance to have the kind of fun a normal human being should receive in it's young years... then again, Nui isn't a human being, but a true Life Fiber. Arriving on top of the hill, she looks down at Nagoya. Huge walls, from which parts of them are still under construction, lock out the city from the rest of the world. Red and white lights enlighten the skyline of the city mostly consisting of huge skyscrapers. Nui gets a big smile on her face.

"Woouooooowwwwww..." she smiles happy. Her eyes shine happy. Impatiently, she runs down the hill, almost falling on her nose if it wouldn't be for her parasol that actually lets her fly in the air. She flies above the many trees of the forest and looks around. Even with the rain, the view is beautiful. This is a once in a life time view for her.

"This is so fun!" she laughs happy and genuine. After a minute in the air, she gently lands on the ground and continues walking. Her yellow boots are a bit muddy already, but it's kinda fun to walk around in the open. Nagoya is relatively close now and the forest ends here. She's curious to find out how the humans live in big cities like Nagoya.

...

Hoomaru meanwhile walks through the mansion and to Ragyo's office, which Satsuki notices. It's 9 PM now. Satsuki follows her secretly. Interested, she listens to both of them talking by standing next to the wall.

"Lady Ragyo, the certificate of ownership of Honnô, as you ordered." Hoomaru says and seems like to give Ragyo the folder she's holding most of the time. Her voice is a bit dull as Satsuki only hears them through the wall. Apparently, Ragyo starts turning the pages of the folder slowly. A thunder rings out again outside. Another page is turned. Hoomaru waits patiently.

"What an absurd idea my daughter has..." Ragyo mumbles.

"An idea?"

"A school that rewards the efficiency of students with new uniforms. By making the students activate their natural strive for strength and power, they will do everything to achieve a new uniform, I assume."

"Hrmpf."

"Yet I admit... it is an approach I value... more than those my ears hear every week."

"It does sound unconventional. But I do see the potential."

"There certainly is one, indeed." Ragyo agrees.

"Your daughter is intelligent."

"She is indeed. She is stubborn sometimes... yet this isn't always a bad thing. She'd do well developing her skills with this academy. By that, she could learn more about leading, and take on more responsibility."

"I've seen a lot of sketches and notes laying around in her room recently. Sketches of a huge building and these... uniforms. There are stars on them. I suppose they display the value of a student."

"Interesting." Ragyo answers.

"I do not have the right to influence your opinion... but Lady Satsuki's idea is one we should perceive."

"Indeed."

Silence. Ragyo turns another page.

"These fanatical Nudist Beach terrorists destroyed another factory. And this man, Isshin Matoi, seems to know a lot about our corporation. I wonder how he knows all of that."

"I assume my former husband told him everything before he died." Ragyo answers calm. Satsuki hates hearing them talk about her dad.

"Isshin Matoi has to be one of the most important subjects of Nudist Beach. Do you assume they are their leader?"

"It's possible. To think an old man would lead a group of naked vermin..." Ragyo answers in disbelief.

"It is surreal indeed. I've been thinking of letting our security manager, Mr. Masaru Yamamoto, work on this topic. He'll find out where he is sooner or later."

"Yes. Tell him to start working."

"Very well." Hoomaru answers and starts walking. Satsuki quietly walks back into her room and starts thinking.

"This Isshin Matoi... who could he be?" Satsuki asks herself curious and writes his name on a little sheet of paper to keep him in her mind.

...

Cars drive around on the streets. Their lights enlighten the darkness of the night, and reveal the strong rain fall. A thunder rings out once again, and then, a lightning is visible briefly in the sky. Nui looks carefully under her parasol out to the sky and jumps up happily as she see's the lightning.

"Wow..." she reacts happy and continues walking on the street that leads into the inner city of Nagoya. The gates and walls here are impressive to the little girl.

"Are all humans living in castles?" she wonders curious. She has a bit of knowledge regarding history, apparently. Walking through the dark tunnels of the gates, she arrives in the inner city, with a speechless face. Humans are everywhere, holding up umbrellas or run around due to the rain. Cars drive through the city, and in the background, a huge water puddle is whirled up thanks to a car driving onto it. Neon lights lighten up the city. She doesn't know where to look at first.

"So many humans..." she mumbles and holds up her parasol again. She is proud of her own little parasol. It's a great gift from Lady Ragyo - she is a very kind and caring person, as she believes. Nui notices how a REVOCS employee passes her. As the future Grand Couturier, she already has some reputation in the corporation.

"The small Grand Couturier is here? You're only walking around when the Director is with you." the woman says. Nui nods.

"Yes! But Lady Ragyo said I can walk around freely now!" Nui smiles proud.

"I see. Well, don't walk around here too long then and make sure you are at home quickly. These streets are dangerous around this time, and most people are very bad towards young girls." the employee reacts.

"How do I recognize bad people?"

"... hm... if your tummy says something feels wrong, you should be very careful." she says. Nui nods slowly.

"Have a good evening now, and keep yourself safe." and shortly after, the woman walks away. Nui looks at her with a smile.

"What a stupid lady." she chuckles.

The curious little Nui walks through the rainy streets of Nagoya, with beautiful lights everywhere. Restaurants, clubs, clothing stores and wonderful buildings, all made out of concrete. There is something interesting to see everywhere. She doesn't know what all of these buildings are supposed for, but being able to find it out makes it all more fun. Following up, the little girl continues walking through the streets, carefully watching for puddles, after all, she doesn't want to get soaked up entirely. Here and there, a drop hits the skirt, but that is okay. Arriving at a huge alley, she walks into it. Dozens of people are around here, talking a bit or eat something. A few little roofs protect them from getting wet. There are also fun little vending machines, which is even more fascinating. She walks towards one of them and climbs them up as she can barely see what's inside. There are cool little teddy bears and other plushies inside. Nui jumps around happily and tries to get one of the plushies, but nothing happens. She needs a coin apparently. Disappointed, she walks away.

"Stupid thing." she mumbles and continues walking. Nui notices a window wall next to a store, with TVs inside. An action movie is running right now. Interested, Nui looks at it for a minute, while the rain falls onto her parasol. She notices a homeless person sitting on the street and under a little roof.

"Hey, you there, you look funny, why are you sitting there?" Nui asks curious.

"... do you maybe have a coin for me, young lady?"

"Nope."

"... oh..."

"Why are you sitting here? Ain't it cold for you?" she asks curious.

"... I've been kicked out of my home..."

"Why's that?"

"My family... doesn't want me anymore..."

"Oh. Well. There's only one person that likes me too."

"Who... are you, I... saw you in the TV once..."

"Hihi. Nui Harime, Grand Couturier of REVOCS."

"... what?"

"Mhm, heard that right! How about you stop sitting around and actually get a job?" Nui asks sassy.

"What...?"

"Come to REVOCS! It's amusing to see you here buuuuuuuut Lady Ragyo and I are always happy to have new workers. Now stand up and get yourself a job, we take everyone!" Nui smiles. The homeless person starts thinking.

"... and where do I do that?"

"Just go to the next facility and ask an employee, they will help you if you tell them the great and lovely Grand Couturier send you! Here, have a puppet!" Nui smiles and gives the homeless person a little puppet of hers. The puppet looks pretty good, although the future ones she will stitch look more cleaner. For a thirteen year old girl though, they are very impressive. The homeless person smiles and nods. Nui then smiles too. The person then stands up and walks to the next REVOCS clothing store. Nui smiles.

"Hehe... one more tool for Lady Ragyo." she smiles proud. Well, Nui not making too much fun of the situation certainly shows that she does have some sort of moral left. Maybe Satsuki and Hoomaru really are just boring? In any case, Nui walks to the street and next to a puddle, and then, a car hits the puddle and the water whirls up, hitting Nui's sweet clothes. She sighs annoyed.

"Eh, that's what I'm getting for being nice nice and not bad nice." she mumbles to herself and looks at her dress. She then shrugs with her shoulders and continues walking. There is a nearby clothing store of REVOCS which the homeless person already entered. Nui notices how an employee talks with them and brings them into the backroom. It worked apparently. The little Grand Couturier looks around and see's many nice clothes made by REVOCS. Cute dresses, expensive suits and neat everyday clothes hang here. She feels comfortable here, that's for sure.

"So that's where all the clothes I make for Ragyo will be sent to." she smiles and touches a few clothes. They all feel really nice and Nui can sense the Life Fibers inside them.

"Hey, little friends." she mumbles to herself quiet as she looks at the clothes. She can hear a slight and quiet voice in a language humans cannot understand. A little chuckle leaves her and then she walks out of the building.

"Making fun of me being completely soaked, who do they think they are?" she chuckles and continues walking. The thick atmosphere due to the neon lights and the thunderstorm make up for a fun trip through Nagoya. As she continues walking through the streets, a group of five men in black suits watch her...

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Hoomaru turns a page. She's sitting in the living room of the manor, reading a magazine about nature. Satsuki listens her turning the pages every once in a while. It's around 10 PM now. Kuroido walks through the living room, rearranging a few things Nui mistreated before - for example a portrait of a flower.

"This annoying brat..." he mumbles evil. Hoomaru doesn't react and continues reading, although she is clearly annoyed by him.

"Looking forward already when she leaves this holy building." he continues. Hoomaru rools with her eyes, then she puts away the

magazine and looks to Kuroido.

"You are a sad man, you know that?"

"Say again?"

"You heard me right. You are a sad man. Being this annoyed by a little kid and actually looking forward to her leaving the manor is certainly concerning. A man like you should be able to stand above the moods of a little girl." Hoomaru says protective over Nui.

"You might stand above me, Miss Hoomaru, yet you should be very careful with your words, once again."

"I surely wont. I might be a quiet observant, however, I do have more than enough of always hearing you cry about the little Nui. Yes, Nui is annoying, and yes, Nui can be very mean, however, with thirteen, she is a small kid. She doesn't receive any love because the Director thinks she doesn't need love. That is why we have to approach and treat her different. I would prefer a kind girl too, but life is cruel, just like this world. Now keep your mouth closed and let off your emotions somewhere, but not when I want to enjoy the end of my working day!" she gripes angry. Satsuki raises her eyebrows impressed.

"Haven't expected you to be this angry." Satsuki mumbles surprised in her room. Kuroido grins ugly.

"Indeed, Lady Harime is a tool and she will be treated as such." he answers. Hoomaru stands up and walks towards him.

"Leave now!" Hoomaru orders Kuroido who then leaves the room.

"Asshole..." she mumbles annoyed. Satsuki leaves her room and looks down to Hoomaru.

"Everything alright, Hoomaru?" Satsuki asks, pretending to be worried.

"Everything is alright, Lady Satsuki. Apologies for my emotional outbreak. As you know, Mr. Kuroido is a man I despise."

"I understand." Satsuki answers, watching Hoomaru sitting down again. Satsuki notices the nature magazine.

"You read about nature?" Satsuki asks.

"Yes, Lady Satsuki."

"Interesting."

"It is indeed. I like nature in general. Living here in Japan truly is an honor. I've heard you had an idea for Honnô island?"

"Yes."

"Remarkable. You surely are more mature than other young women." Hoomaru answers impressed. Satsuki does not answer, as she doesn't care for Hoomarus words.

"Forgive me. It was not my intention to bore you." Hoomaru answers submissive. Satsuki enters her room again.

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Nui stands in front of a theatre. People with suits stand there. Seems fun, or so she thinks. She continues walking, thinking that maybe she could visit a theatre sometimes. Hopefully without humans then. Nui is in the inner city now and speaks to a civilian.

"Hey, you." Nui says.

"Hm?"

"You guys have a pavillion or a park here? It's super boring here. I want to see flowers." she asks.

"Hahaha..." the civilian laughs and walks away.

"Buffoon." Nui reacts.

"How did you just call me?"

"A buffoon. Oh, and you can also go and die." Nui smiles. As the man approaches her, Nui hits his nose, causing him to fall into a water puddle. Nui laughs mischievous, while the man moans in the background. The group of men follow Nui, however, she doesn't notice that. There is a little vending machine. Curiously, the Grand Couturier takes a look at it. There are various snacks inside the machine - chocolate bars, granola bars, bags of chips... and popcorn. Her eyes shine brightly for a second, and her smile gets bigger and bigger.

"Oooooooooohhhh, popcorn!" she smiles excited. She never ate popcorn and so she would love to try it out. Licking her mouth happily, she tries to get to the popcorn somehow by using her parasol to slam the glass open, but it doesn't work. She's disappointed by that.

"*sigh*... that's lame." she says sad and thinks of another way on how to get the popcorn. She would need a few Yen coins, but there are none on the ground. Since there are no coins, she tries to slam the glass again, but again, no success.

"Grrr..." she grumbles and starts smiling. Now it's a riddle for her, a fun little game. And Nui likes games. The moment she tries to find a way to open the machine on another way, a man with a deeply black suit arrives.

"Hey, you." the man says. Nui turns around.

"Wow, you are a giant!" she says and smiles.

"Nui Harime?"

"The one and only!" she laughs and turns around as she tries to open the machine. Then she pouts.

"Do you have an idea how to open the machine? I want that popcorn! It looks soooooo tasty!" she smiles.

And all of a sudden, the man drags her hair as strong as he can, dragging her through an alley. Nui tries to defend herself.

"AH THAT HURTS, OW, WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT!?" she screams angry, fidgeting around. The man walks precisely through the alley. Steam rises up, and there is a trash bin too. A group of men stand there.

"That's her." a bald man with black glasses says.

"Yeah."

"Good." he reacts. The bald man seems to be the leader. Nui tries to get off from the evil man who holds her hair, but he is not impressed in any way. She's just a kid. Then she uses her parasol to hit the leg of the man, and following up, his mates start attacking Nui, kicking and punching her everywhere. Blood leaves her nose, as it has been broken. Eventually, the man who dragged Nui proceeds to kick her parasol away.

"No! My parasol!" she screams sad and disappointed and tries to reach it.

"Why are you doing that!? You are mean! Lady Ragyo will kill you if she finds out about this!" Nui threatens angry. The leader walks into the warehouse. Meanwhile, Nui's kidnappers let her go, letting her grab her parasol, and then, one of them starts attacking her with a baseball bat, slamming it on her several times. Nui moans painfully.

"Argh!" she moans, attacking with the grip of the parasol, hitting the baseball bat man at his cheek. This causes a small wound. For that, he starts to slam the baseball bat at her even more aggressive, making her bleed on her head. Her face lands into a little dirty water puddle and the hair is all wet, with dirt landing on it.

"Ewww! You... !" she tries to threaten and gets kicked into her face. The bald man appears again, and a "click" is audible. Suddenly, the men let off Nui and walk away a few steps.

"You'll pay for this! Lady Ragyo will kill you!" Nui says and tries to stand up. She's running away with her parasol, protecting it with her arms, but then, a powerful gunshot is audible, and suddenly, Nui falls down, as her right kneecap got shot away. A lot of blood leaves her severed leg.

"NO!" she screams scared and sad, trying to crouch away, until she can hear steps again. It's the leader. He's carrying a shotgun with him, and he loads the next shotgun shell into the weapon. The empty shell falls on the ground. Then, the man drags her up and throws her against the trash bin in the alley. Nui looks up at him with a scared and sad face, protecting her parasol.

"This hurts... don't do this..." she mumbles scared. The man aims at Nui's head.

"IF YOU DO THIS I'LL KILL ALL OF YO... !"

Everything turns dark. A sound is audible, as if flesh has just exploded. Shreds fall, and blood mixes up with the puddles in the alley. Nui's hand still twitches a little bit. One of the men grab the parasol and looks at it.

"We'll take this as proof for completing the contract."

"Indeed. One of you guys stay here and make sure no one enters this alley. We'll wait for confirmation in the warehouse and then go to this tailors hut to get our payment." the bald man says ice cold. Rain falls into the alley and onto Nui's dead body.

It looks gruesome...

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A clock is ticking in the background. The rain has gotten stronger. Kuroido enters the room. Ragyo is in her office. It's very minimalistic and cold, and it reminds of the design of the presidential office of REVOCS-HQ. A dark ceiling with circles, while the ground and the walls appear cold and lifeless, just like everything else in the manor. Ragyo sits at her desk, looking at Kuroido with a cold face expression.

"The men just killed Lady Harime, as you wished." Kuroido grins ugly. Ragyo nods slowly.

"And so, they killed the small bit of what you could call "humanity." Nui won't let them get away with this."

"As much as I despise your creation for it's personality... it is most valuable for your righteous plans."

"She will obey me. I am the only one that cares for her. Almost... like a mother and daughter." Ragyo says. Hoomaru stands next to the wall of the office, hearing them talking. Even though Hoomaru is on Ragyo's side, killing Nui in order to remove the last bit of humanity, or her moral, as Life Fibers do not know humanity of course and have an own definition, is disturbing to an certain extent...

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Cigarette smokes rises up. One of the men stand at the alley entrance, guarding it. What he doesn't notice though is that the blood in the water slowly moves back into Nui's body. As he is done, he turns around and walks back to the warehouse. Slowly and quietly, Life Fibers regenerate Nui's leg and head. She's covered in blood. Her eyes regenerate again. Nui's cute little yellow bowtie on her neck is completely bloody. She stands up and looks around. Her parasol is gone. The men must have took it with them. Rain falls onto her hair. She's completely dirty and looks horrible. Slowly, she walks towards the warehouse and carefully opens the door while getting used to her regeneration ability, as this is the first time she had to use it. A thunder rings out again, and the sky lightens up

briefly. The bald man is talking with someone via phone, while the other men wait for new orders. Nui sneaks behind a chest.

"Payment is at the tailors hut." he says.

"Always hated this piece of shit child. Always thinking so high about herself."

"Good riddance."

"Let's move out. You two wait here. We'll come back shortly, we still have another contract in Nagoya." the leader mentions. She watches three men, including the leader, leaving the warehouse and using a car. Is this warehouse their hideout, maybe? One of the men, the one who used the baseball bat, walks back to the alley, probably to hide Nui's dead corpse in the trash bin. As he passes by Nui without noticing her, entering the alley, he notices Nui is gone.

"Where the fuck is she!?" he mumbles confused. Suddenly, his leg is hit by Nui who's wielding the baseball bat from before. The man falls down. Nui starts slamming the bat onto his body which pains the man a lot. Then, Nui kicks into his face, breaking his nose, and as she lies onto his back, he notices Nui. Nui sits onto him, putting her feet onto the arms of the man. He tries to attack her with his legs, but he can't reach her. Nui smiles at him, and as a lightning appears, it looks from his perspective as if the devil would stand before him, due to the lightning behind her head, forming two devils horns for a brief second.

"Shit... shit... how the fuck is this possible!?"

Nui starts holding up the baseball bat with an malicious smiling.

"Oh god, wait!" he screams and then, Nui slams the baseball bat with all her power into his face, crushing it. He's bleeding hard, but Nui continues. And again. And again. And again. And again! With every hit she crushes his head even more, and blood flies around,

landing onto her skirt. Eventually, she throws the baseball bat away and looks onto her dress and the fresh blood of the man.

"I... need to... kill more cleaner... my poor dress." she mumbles addicted and walks to the warehouse, leaving the dead man behind her. The second man sits on a chair in the warehouse, looking outside, apparently texting something. Nui slowly sneaks up on him and see's that he is writing something to his parents.

"I'll be back in two hours again, mom, don't worry." he wrote and put a little smile at the end of the sentence.

"Do you like your mommy?" Nui asks and starts attacking the man by pulling out Life Fibers out of her fingers, using them to choke him. Nui drags him back, causing the chair to lean back. The man tries to defend himself but is unable to remove the Life Fibers around his neck or even punch Nui in the face or arm. Nui tightens the Life Fibers, and blood leaves the neck, although she had to put more pressure on them to actually kill him. She knows that exactly.

"How's it feel to die? Must be pretty weird?" Nui asks curious. The man gargles around.

"Hahaha! You are dying! You are dying!" she's singing happily and enjoys him suffering, but suddenly, he moves the chair onto his left, falling down. Nui is unable to catch him and falls down herself. The man quickly stands up panickly and holds his hand onto his neck scared, then running to a car - a pickup truck. He quickly starts the engine and is about to drive, but Nui is able to catch up and jump into the truck without him noticing due to his immense anxiety. He's breathing hardly and drives out of the city. Nui carefully looks up to the mirrors on the left and right side to see what he is doing, and after a second or two, she quickly puts her head down into the truck which is filled with rain water. It feels ugly and dirty. Nui hates that. As much as she likes rain, but getting soaked up is annoying.

"... how the fuck did that happened..." he coughs painfully. His voice sounds pretty smokey and sore. For minutes, Nui waits in the car,

impatiently, and then, the man stops and leaves the car scared. Nui climbs out of the car completely soaked and chases him. He notices that and starts running scared. The blood thirsting girl hunts him down with Life Fibers in her hands.

"Are we playing "catching?!" I love to play games!" she chuckles. The suit wearer tries to climb up a hill but falls down due to his missing concentration and rolls down to Nui. Nui jumps at him and uses Life Fibers once again.

"Hahaha! This is fun! I love this game! Do your friends like to play hide and seek?! I love it! Especially when I can search them! It's just so fun to see them scared and angry when I notice them." she explains while choking him, causing blood to leave the neck. The man's fidgeting like crazy, and he just wants to get rescued. He's scared, it is visible in his eyes.

"Why are you scared? Isn't it fun to play with me? Why does everyone hate me? Why does everyone only play with me when they hate me?! Do you like me?!" she asks. "

"Plea... se..."

"I can't heaaar youuu! You seem to diiiiiieeeee! You can go to sleep now!" she laughs and makes a knot around his neck, then tightens it together. The neck breaks, blood flies out of his mouth, and so, the man instantly dies. Nui then stands up and kicks him down the hill with a satisfied face, although she seems to think.

"That... was better, but I need... to be quicker." she mumbles. Nui climbs up the hill. She knows this area very well. There is a good sight to the Kiryuin manor from here. She can see Lady Ragyos Silhouette behind her office windows. Seems like she's looking down at Nui.

"Lady Ragyo... watches me..." she mentions almost in an honored and admiring way.

Arriving on the hill, she can see the tailors hut. It's about 15 minutes away from the manor. Nui see's one of the men walking through the forest. He's probably about to go to the street to start the engine of their car. Nui walks in front of him and looks down to him with a smile.

"The fuck!? How are you alive!?" he asks loud. Nui chuckles and walks towards him. Angry, he runs towards Nui and tries jumping onto her, but Nui dodges and grabs a branch on the ground, aiming precisely on the man's neck. She even hits him once. Blood leaves his neck, but due to the adrenalin output, he continues fighting as if nothing happened. Nui is surprised by that, and pushed into a water puddle, falling into it. Following up, the man aggressively punches Nui, trying to break her nose, but Nui holds her hands onto his face and tries to pop his eyes into his head with her thumbs. Unable to see, the man tries everything to hurt Nui, yet he only is able to rip off her bowtie, throwing it into the puddle. The man screams painfully.

"noooOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO YOU WONT YOU STUPID PIECE OF SHIT!" he screams and punches her arms away. Quickly, the man grabs the branch and tries to ram it into Nui's chest area, where her heart is located, and although he pierces her body slightly, Nui continues easily and laughs. Suddenly, her arms transform into blades. She rams them into his heart and then rips it out across the body, splitting the upper body in half. The man looks at Nui in disbelief.

"Stupid little human, thinks he could survive me." she grins and kicks him away. He tries to walk to the hut but falls down and dies, rolling down the hill.

Nui stands up and walks over the dead man, arriving at the hut. Her entire body is full of blood, but it feels amazing. It feels right. As if she was made for that. Made to kill. Nui notices the both men that are still left, talking in the hut. They haven't noticed Nui's presence, and so, Nui opens the door calmly and enters the hut. The men look shocked.

"Bold of you to use the hut I learned to tailor as a hideout, human vermin." she smiles, removing the blood on her face with her hand. Quickly, the bald man runs to the shotgun that lays onto the table, next to the parasol. He unlocks the weapon and tries to attack Nui, but Nui can throw the weapon against a corner. Then, she is attacked by the second man from behind and slammed against the work bench with the stitching machine. Blood splashes out of her head.

As the second man tries to attack Nui, Nui grabs a few items that were on her work bench and throws several needles against him, which all hit. This attack is followed up by Nui ramming the needles even deeper into his body by punching them into it. Lastly, her arms transform into arms once again, and so, she slashes the mans body open. Blood lands onto the window, slowly flowing down. Suddenly, a shot rings out, and an ear deafening sound is audible due to the shotgun shot the man just commenced. Nui laughs as she watches his mate miserably bleeding out.

"You stupid worthless girl! How the fuck did you survive a shotgun shot?! I BLEW YOUR HEAD OFF!" he screams like a maniac, aiming at Nui once again. However, Nui leans her head up, touching the shotgun barrel with it, smiling at him. Carefully, she moves her hands behind her back.

"I'm not a ordinary human, silly..." she grins.

"I'm a superior life form... chosen by the Life Fibers." Nui continues, holding her weapon of choice ready.

"... and you can't hope to beat me." she concludes and attacks with a sharp measuring tape. With that, she is able to rip off a part of the bald man's head. Blood spreads, and the skull is visible if you take a closer look. Scared, the man shoots once more, missing Nui though, and an ear deafening sound is audible again, which Nui doesn't mind though. The bald man rams the wall behind him, and then, Nui starts attacking him with the measuring tape more and more, harder and harder, with blood and skin flying through the room, all with

unbelievable precision and speed. Eventually, Nui throws the measuring tape against him and grabs up a needle as big as her hand, ramming it into the man several times. With an euphorical laugh, she rams the needle into him several times.

"YOU HAVE LO-HOST! YOU HAVE LO-HOST!" she sings happy.

"This is SOOOOOOOOOO much fun!" she laughs. Lastly, she rams the needle into his head, ultimately killing him. Satisfied, Nui falls back and looks around. Blood is everywhere. On the wall, the interior, the stitching machine. And then there are the corpses. She stands up.

"They only played with me because they disliked me..." she realizes and leaves the hut.

Nui walks back to her bowtie but she notices it's completely soaked and bloody. Because of that, she throws it away and walks back to her home. On her way home, she finds a large water puddle. She walks up to it and looks into it. It reflects her face, with all the blood, and a smile.

And so, she laughs...

...

It's 11:00 PM. Satsuki passes by Hoomaru as she walks back to her room to get ready for bed after taking a quick bath. Satsuki's still wearing her sailors uniform, since she prefers to wear her pyjama only in her room. Hoomaru leaves the living room.

The window door to the living room opens slowly.

Satsuki rearranges her sketches in a few folders. One for the academy, one for the Goku uniforms, and then there are a few folders about the hierarchy and the subjects for the school. Someone knocks on her door, just as Satsuki was about to take out her pyjama.

It's Nui. She's full of blood and smiles. Satsuki looks at Nui unimpressed.

(The track for this scene is "KILL la KILL IF Nui Harime Theme. Listen to it on YouTube while reading if you like to.)

"Hello, Satsuki." Nui smiles. Satsuki doesn't answer and watches Nui calmly, but serious.

"Do you want to play?"

"Leave." Satsuki says and tries to close the door, yet Nui holds it with her bloody right hand.

"You will play." Nui threatens and walks into the room. Satsuki stands there, ice cold and resolved, until she and Nui's noses are almost touching each other.

"And you better play well, or I will kill you." Nui smiles and takes out her bloody measuring tape. Satsuki keeps eye contact to Nui the entire time and walks to her desk, grabbing Bakuzan carefully and calm. Then she walks back to her, unlocking Bakuzan. A "kling" is audible.

"You are disgusting." Satsuki reacts. Both opponents look deeply into each others eyes. Satsuki notices something in Nui's eyes. Devils masks. Her normal eyes are gone. Why? It doesn't matter.

Suddenly, Nui attacks with the measuring tape. Satsuki throws out Bakuzan out of the sword scabbard and parries the attack, then hitting Nui with Bakuzans grip. This slams Nui against the overpass fences. She falls down onto the living room. Satsuki calmly walks to Nui and jumps down. Glass shards are everywhere. Quickly, Nui stands up and grins, attacking with the measuring tape once again. Satsuki parries the attacks once more with ease.

"Hahahaha! I knew it! It works! You like me!" she laughs.

"Pathetic." Satsuki mumbles, and so, Nui throws needles towards her. Satsuki deflects all of them in the air, and walks slowly towards Nui who has gone wild. Nui tries to attack with the measuring tape again by performing several over head attacks, yet Satsuki is able to wrap around the tape onto Bakuzan and drags Nui towards her. She punches Nui into her face with a fist attack, who then falls on her back and against the couch.

"Who do you think you are that you are allowed to face me, Harime?" Satsuki threatens and attacks again, yet Nui blocks with the measuring tape.

"You only play with me when you dislike me! Hahaha! Why does everyone play with me when they hate me?! Is that how love works!?" she asks curious and attacks once more by jumping off the couch and attacking from the air. Satsuki hits Nui with Bakuzan and slams her against a desk. Hoomaru runs into the room as she noticed the battle sounds, visibly surprised and shocked.

"What are you doing!?" Hoomaru asks surprised. Realizing what is going on, she runs up the stairs to Ragyo's office. Arriving in the third floor, she opens the door to Ragyo's room who seemingly expected Hoomaru.

"Lady Ragyo, your daughter and Harime are fighting for their lives in the living room and I can not stop them! Forgive my failure, yet you have to intervene!" Hoomaru says stressed. Ragyo stands up calm and interested, leaving the room, with Hoomaru following her.

"Always so mean and uppish, Satsuki! Just you wait!" Nui smiles happy and throws a plate against Satsuki. Satsuki destroys the plate with Bakuzan easily. Once more, Nui attacks with the measuring tape, and again, Satsuki wraps it around but kicks it off her after she got close enough to her. Nui searches for a weapon but can't find one. Satsuki aims with Bakuzan at Nui.

"You are pathetic. Your borderless selfishness and your hate towards everything that is not you causes your failure in this battle. Have the

manners to give up!" Satsuki orders, awaiting Nui's answer. Nui smiles and removes some blood on her body. Then she snuffles.

"I love it when you talk with me. You are always so kind and attentive when you don't like me." she grins and grabs out a few more needles from her back slowly.

"You always talk with me when you hate me. You never talk with me otherwise." she continues and holds her needles ready.

"I just want to play!" Nui explains and tries to attack, but Satsuki noticed her attempt and counters with Bakuzan, punching away the needles. Then, Satsuki performs an uppercut with Bakuzan, throwing Nui into the air. Next up, Satsuki sprints towards her, performing a few, but very powerful and precise slash attacks into the air. They seem to miss. Seem, because suddenly, blue waves appear in the air, flying towards Nui and hitting her after Satsuki stands with her back to Nui, not granting her a single look. Eventually, Satsuki puts back Bakuzan into the sword scabbath.

SECRET ARTS - LOSS OF LIFE FIBERS

Suddenly, Nui's clothes explode, and she falls down completely naked and beaten. Nui inhales and exhales quickly, and as she notices that she is completely naked, she is ashamed. In this very moment, Ragyo and Hoomaru appear. Hoomaru shakes her head, while Satsuki looks unimpressed to Ragyo, who does the same to Satsuki and then to Nui.

"You seriously dare to DESTROY MY CLOTHES, you stupid idiot?!" Nui screams evil. Satsuki then turns to Nui.

"Weakling." Satsuki mocks Nui.

"Weakling... I'll show you, Satsuki sweetie... just you wait. I'll make sure you hate me... my playtime has just begun..." she threatens angry. Satsuki leaves the room and walks back to her's. Ragyo looks interested towards Nui.

"Hoomaru. Bring Nui new clothes to the bathing halls. I think we have her dress in purple as well." Ragyo orders. Hoomaru nods submissive and leaves the room. Then, Ragyo softly touches Nui's face. She's ashamed and disappointed, it seems.

"Lady Ragyo, I..."

"Shhh..." Ragyo reacts quiet and caring. She holds her creation warm and kindly and pets her upper body carefully while Nui just appears disappointed.

"Come, Nui. You need a bath."

"Yes... Lady Ragyo." she answers. Both of them enter the bath halls.

The bathing halls appear extremely impressive and huge. The water is wonderful and clear, and the little water fall that comes out of the statue in the middle of the room is quiet, yet wonderful to look at. The rain is not audible here. Only the nice water. Ragyo takes off her clothes and walks into the bath. She helps Nui get into it, after all, Nui isn't as tall as she is in the future. The water feels nice and warm, and it gives a good feeling. Nui sits down next to Ragyo and turns her back to her, and by that, Ragyo is able to start cleaning her slowly.

"What did you learn, my dear little Nui?" Ragyo asks curious and interested. Nui hesitates first. Ragyo starts cleaning her by collecting little hands full of water who she then drops onto her blonde hair. Then, she moves her hands through the hair to wash off the blood.

"They... attacked me... I killed them, because I was stronger... but why did they attacked me, Lady Ragyo?" Nui asks curious. Ragyo hesitates and cleans her hair some more. She seems to enjoy it. After that, she takes some water again and cleans Nui's face. Carefully, and soft. Not rushed, but slow and comfortable.

"Humans... are not like us, Nui. They are weak. They hate beings like you and me." Ragyo begins to explain. After the blood on Nui's

face is gone, Ragyo slowly moves her hands down to the shoulder area.

"They are afraid. That... is why they do everything to destroy us. It's the price we pay for being the most superior life forms. Humans fear the strong, as they cannot defeat them, like you experienced." she continues and cleans off the blood on Nui's shoulders.

"Do not doubt yourself, Nui. You are superior. You've felt it. It felt good, yes?" she asks rhetorically and starts cleaning Nui's personal areas. Nui twitches up briefly.

"Just like me. That's how it feels. Liberating. Welcoming and comfortable. And it is fun, isn't it?"

"It does, Lady Ragyo." Nui answers smiling briefly.

"Joy up, Nui, for you are the one who will end humanities suffering. Humans were only able to develop by you - the Life Fibers. Without you, they wouldn't stand a chance. And so, it shall be you who will be allowed to rule over them. They owe you everything. Their lives are in your hands. Humans are your toys, and the world is your sandbox, until it shall end." Ragyo mentions and leans her head next to Nui's ear as she starts cleaning Nui's hips. Nui can feel Ragyo's body.

"Lady Ragyo..."

"Tell me, my dear. How good is your german?" Ragyo asks calm.

"I practiced every day, as you wished. Just like french and italian, Lady Ragyo. I... prefer french the most."

"Do you know... what the germans mean when they say
"Blumenkranz?"

"It's... a floral crown, it... consists of withered flowers. They are dead."

"Indeed... now... try to sing along. You will like this." Ragyo smiles.

"Ich möchte stärker werden..." - I want to be stronger...

"Ich möchte... stärker... werden..."

"Weil unsere Welt sehr grausam ist..." - for our world is cruel...

"Weil unsere... Welt... sehr grausam ist..."

"Es ist ratsam, welke Blumen zu entfernen..." - it is advisable to remove withered flowers...

"Es ist... ratsam... welke... Blumen zu ent... fernen..."

AN: Thanks for reading once again. Oh boy, Ragyo's singing Blumenkranz to Nui to corrupt her even further. What do you think of the chapter? I think it was pretty heavy to write, although I had fun. ^^ I'm german by the way, so uh, you can trust me that the translation is correct. :D See ya again in chapter 11 when Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui get back to Ôsaka... followed by Neo-REVOCS units and Masaru himself... If you like to, leave me a review, I'd highly appreciate it! :D

A Scar On My Heart

AN: I'm sorry this chapter took so long. I was quite busy the last days and therefore didn't had a lot of time working on it, but now it's done. It might be that the next chapter will take about a week or 8, 9 days until it's done again since I have birthday on August 10th and it's possible I won't write or draw then. Other than that, enjoy this new chapter! :)

The blizzard howls outside. A chimney crackles in the background quietly. Nui wakes up and inhales deeply in and out. Her clone sits next to an window, looking at her worried.

"Are you alright, Miss Harime?" the clone asks. Nui looks down. She seems to be confused. At the very least, she does not know what to say. Ryuko however wakes up and looks at Nui annoyed. She and Satsuki lay on the ground of the hut, while Nui was sleeping on the bed. However, Nui sew a few blankets for them, mostly made out of silk, and with a few Life Fibers as well to keep them warm. The chimney keeps the hut warm and comfortable during the heavy blizzard.

"Man... you can't even let me sleep, can you?" Ryuko asks. Nui hesitates.

"... it wasn't my intention to." Nui answers, seemingly thinking.

"If you say so." Ryuko answers and tries to lay down, while Senketsu hangs on her shoulder and asleep.

"I just..."

"Hm?"

"... I... nevermind."

"Spit it out."

"You wouldn't care anyway." Nui answers.

"Probably, yeah."

"Miss Harime, do you wish a drink? You seem exhausted." the clone mentions worried, holding Nui on her arm. Ryuko watches the clone. It's kinda weird to see how well the clone cares for Nui.

"Why'd you even need a clone for the night?" Ryuko asks curious yet with a hostile vibe. Nui looks at Ryuko. Something seems to bother the Grand Couturier. It's always like that when she wakes up.

"I... just don't like to sleep alone, that's all."

"Aha."

"... and you probably also think I would kill you once you close your eyes, correct?" Nui asks, looking at the scissor blades behind Ryuko.

"I never know what you're going to do next." Ryuko answers.

"Well... I don't want to kill you. Just so you know." Ryuko's arch enemy responds calmly.

"Good. Makes it easier to kill you then." Ryuko answers. Following up, Nui sighs, looking down at the ground and then nodding quickly.

"Alright... good night, love." Nui answers and lays down, with her back facing Ryuko. Ryuko hears Nui sighing. Her clone covers her with a blanket and then walks back to the window. Ryuko looks slightly irritated.

"Nui?" Ryuko asks. Nui doesn't react. Her clone watches Ryuko worried and then the chimney.

"Clone?"

"... uhm... yes?" the clone reacts hesitating. Ryuko thinks briefly.

"... actually, nevermind." Ryuko answers and lays down again, looking at the scissor blade. Both women have their backs faced at each other now. Minutes pass, and the blizzard goes on. After ten minutes, Ryuko looks back to Satsuki. She's sleeping deeply. Nui however seems to have hid under the blanket, while the clone sits next to her, slowly moving it's right hand onto the blanket. Eventually, Ryuko turns around again and continues sleeping.

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Day 8:

Sewing machines can be heard. Dozens of employees work here in one of the many stitching halls of the Neo-REVOCS HQ. Steps become audible as Ichiro walks onto one of the long pedestals. Down on the left and right side, you can see employees working at the sewing machines. The CEO of Neo-REVOCS walks into one of the large storage rooms that are connected with each stitching hall. Crates with Life Fibers are everywhere, mixed with usual materials. Crates and other goods are delivered via huge elevators with enough space for forty people. Masaru examines the new goods with a few guards. Usually, the employees transport the crates far down from the parking lot up here into the building, which can take a minute or two until the elevator arrives.

"... and be quick. Hall B, C and D need more materials in 20 minutes!" Masaru orders, and so, the guards leave. Ichiro walks next to Masaru and looks around briefly.

"Master Ichiro, good to see you here. We've got new Life Fiber crates ready. I'm surprised the production goes so well and fast, these new so called "Fiber factories" you ordered to build really help out. I need to take a look at them myself sometime. I can only

remember that we got Life Fibers from some sort of "primordial Life Fiber," although I heard about it after the old Director died."

"Come with me." Ichiro orders. Masaru follows him up to the presidential office. He throws a few Life Fibers on the desk and then turns around to Masaru with a curious face expression.

"So is that all you know about Life Fibers?"

"Well... they are also very versatile and handy for much more than just clothes, although we mainly use them for such."

"Nothing, I see. That's alright. Masaru, I have an assignment for you which you will like."

"An assignment?"

"Mhm." the CEO hums, while the Life Fibers he threw on the desk slowly materialize into some kind of uniform. Ichiro pulls it to him and then gives the uniform Masaru.

"What's that?"

"A "Goku-Uniform." Three Stars, works like the uniforms from Honnouji-Academy. I assume you've heard of them?"

"I did. But I can't fight."

"It's not about fighting. It's about controlling. You do look weak, that is true... however, you seem smart enough, after all, you've programmed the Ashigaru. You'd make for a good... well, controller, so to speak. One that defeats his enemies not by sheer strength, but by smart decisions, without getting his hands dirty."

"Does that mean I... I should..."

"Are you afraid of three women and a piece of clothing?"

"No, not at all, I just..."

"Don't think too much. Travel to Nagoya, assemble a few units and hunt down Matoi, Kiryuin and Harime. They've changed their plans and are now onto their way to the "Omine mountain."

"But why? I thought you want to take them as hostages?"

"It is still not about killing, it is about teasing them, not giving them a single chance for a break and making sure they will slowly fall apart. Destroy the facility and kill everyone. Do not kill any of them - I want to kill them myself once they lost their use..."

...

The next morning. It's 10 AM. The blizzard is finally gone, and the sun shines a bit. It's cold on the Ibuki nonetheless. The group made a little row, with Satsuki in the front, Nui on the back and Ryuko between both of them. Senketsu looks around curious. Forests are everywhere around the Ibuki, and even the outskirts of the destroyed Kiryuin manor are visible.

"What a view..." Senketsu comments.

"So we go to that REVOCS base now, huh?" Ryuko asks?

"Yes. Figured if we are near Ôsaka already, we might as well take Hoomaru with us."

"Aight." Ryuko answers and then looks around as well.

"Man, I've never been that high."

"Me neither." Satsuki reacts.

"And me neither." and Nui answers. Ryuko puts her left hand into the trouser pocket, in the right one, she holds the scissor blades tight, although she tries to concentrate a bit to shrink them again. The group walks on a mountain path that will lead to the Omine.

Satsuki climbs up a huge boulder and then looks down. The view is marvelous. The landscape of Honshu, the Japanese main island, is visible everywhere. Forests, more mountains, huge cities, the clouds in the sky, the snow everywhere... and briefly after, Ryuko and Nui join Satsuki and climb up as well.

"Look at this..." Satsuki says amazed. Ryuko is speechless, while Nui smiles happy.

"When all of this is over, the first thing we do is travelling through Japan and see all of it." Satsuki mentions and smiles. Ryuko nods happy.

"Sounds like a plan, Satsuki." Ryuko answers. Satsuki looks to Ryuko and then to Senketsu.

"But until that happens, I need my corporation back."

"What are we waiting for then? Let's kick that clown out of your CEO chair, I can't wait anymore!" Ryuko chuckles, and so does Nui briefly after.

"You guys let me go with ya, right?" Nui grins. Ryuko and Satsuki climb down, then Nui jumps down the boulder as well.

"AH OUCH, I THINK I BROKE MY PINKY TOE!" Nui gripes laughing.

The group continues traveling on the mountain path. The sun rises above Japan, and the three throw shadows, while they walk down relaxed and careful. Everything looks so great on the Ibuki. Via small secret paths, they can use shortcuts to get across the mountain faster and more efficient. Cliffs to carefully walk on, logs that make up for bridges above canyons, and small water falls make the route more interesting. Via gondulas, they can later on progress faster while giving their legs a little break. The group eats a few little snacks and has some smalltalk, while Nui thankfully keeps her mouth shut most of the time, just looking around at the great view, just like Senketsu. Both him and his wearer go to the windows of the

gondula to enjoy the look. After all, Ryuko knows that Senketsu loves sightseeing.

After several hours of wandering and using gondulas, the group leaves the Ibuki and decides to take a coach. It's 2 PM now. Their next target for now is Nara, which is pretty close to Ôsaka and the Omine where Hoomaru is located. Around half the way, the coach stops for a twenty minute break near a cafe which Ryuko and Satsuki use as an opportunity to drink a coffee or tea. Nui meanwhile stays in the bus and crochets. Satsuki also noticed that Ryuko was able to shrink her scissor blades again. Sitting in the small, but comfortable looking cafe, she speaks to her.

"I see you've been able to shrink your scissor blades again." Satsuki answers. Ryuko takes a sip from her coffee and smears away the little moustache she now has. And then, Ryuko grins.

"Hah, yeah. It's in my pocket. Surprised that you haven't noticed it yet."

"Well I was busy talking with the bus driver... seeing three people that are all believed to be dead can make up for quite an interesting conversation."

"Oh yeah, how did you convinced him by the way? Was it your charming choice of words?"

"Of course. Told him all of this was a PR stunt."

"And he believed that!?"

"I doubt it, but he seemed scared enough to let us in." Satsuki grins.

"You are a mean person."

"Indeed." Satsuki answers and sips from her tea. It's nice. Nothing special, but it does the job.

"Haven't been in a cafe for a long time." Satsuki mentions, moving the spoon in the tea a bit.

"I like them. Been there with Mako once, but I sometimes visit them after work. Is pretty neat during winter, especially after a long day. Sitting down at a corner, drinking a coffee and hearing some music or watching news... it's definitely relaxing." Ryuko smiles, moving her legs up a bit.

"I can imagine. Brave of you to seriously work at a callcenter. Houka could have found other jobs for you. I think I can't endure a callcenter... the customers are too idiotic for me."

"Oh believe me Satsuki, most of them are annoying. There are a few customers who are really kind and patient, and then it's fun to help them out, but if I have to listen to them talking about how bad their day was or that they wanna see some kind of tabletop games... let me tell you, it's stressful."

"And your colleagues?"

"They're fine. There was a young man who helped me out and showed me the building, he even gave me tips, but he got fired two months later. He had to help out his mother or something... it's a shame but he was pretty okay." Ryuko says. Satsuki chuckles slightly.

"You sound like you liked him." Satsuki grins.

"N-no... but, but he was nice."

"Mhm. Reminds me that I haven't been in a relationship yet. Might be better like that." Satsuki answers, drinking her tea again. Ryuko shakes her head.

"Nah, don't worry, Satsuki. Sooner or later you'll find someone. You are just a very... uh... authoritarian person, not everyone can handle that. Except the coolest. And there aren't many of them."

"Nice way of describing me as an "evil, dominant partner." Satsuki laughs. Senketsu chuckles.

"You said that now!"

"So, Satsuki, how would your partner look like?" Senketsu asks curious. Satsuki blushes a bit.

"I... actually never made up my mind about that, honestly, I... uhm..."

"Well, what's the first thing that comes into your mind?" Ryuko asks. Senketsu watches Satsuki curious.

"Hm... maybe... he should be a good cook, I believe."

"Cook? Neat."

"I like men who can cook." Satsuki smiles.

"New groundbreaking revelations face the light of day!" Senketsu laughs.

"Senketsu sounds like a cook." she counters. Senketsu blushes.

"Wha-wha, me!? But I don't even have hands!" he answers happy. Ryuko empties her coffee. They notice that the bus will continue in a few minutes, and so, they stand up and buy some more snacks and water bottles. Following up, they sit down in the bus again. With some luck, they should be able to reach the Omine around 11 PM. During the drive, Ryuko and Satsuki look outside sometimes. The bus mostly passes through cities and small villages, there really isn't much nature to see, or anything too special. A few people sit in the bus, but it's rather quiet here.

"We're in Nara this evening. We could take a look at the funfair." Satsuki suggests. Ryuko nods.

"I bet it's boring." Nui grins while she works on a little scarf.

"We'll see about that." Satsuki reacts to that.

"Wonder what the others are doing..." Senketsu mumbles.

...

...

...

"It was three, not one! Those cowards were scared shitless when they saw me! What am I, a loser?" Sanageyama grins pretentious. He, as well as the other Four Deva sit at a table in the canteen of the Nudist Beach base.

"Blablabla, monkey, I wanna see you beating up three well trained swordsmen with ONE slash!" Nonon chuckles.

"Once you know your opponent's weaknesses, victory is much more likely. Knowledge about your enemy never hurts." Houka reacts calm and moves his glasses up.

"Nah dude, if you have enough discipline and a clear mind, you'll win every battle, even without knowledge, Inumuta."

"A clear mind knows how to use knowledge." Houka counters.

"I do."

"Oh, you do? Sounded like you did not." the programmer answers sarcastic.

"You wanna start an argument?" Sanageyama asks grinning.

"It would be unfair for you."

"Just like old times, huh, big guy?" Nonon smiles towards Gamagoori. Gamagoori nods slowly.

"Mhm. This conversation lacks Lady Satsuki however. With her endless authority, she would terminate every conversation that is doomed to become an argument between the dog and the monkey."

"Well I mean, you could start yelling like crazy, then everyone shuts their mouth as well." Nonon answers.

"I stopped yelling."

"For real?"

"I've went back to my family. Imagine they hear me yell around, the entire neighbourhood would wake up. And we live on the land!" Gamagoori answers.

"Hahaha, damn, then yeah, might be good that you stopped with your yelling. I'll miss it."

"However, if Sanageyama starts talking nonsense once more, I will make sure he'll learn." Gamagoori continues. Then, both look back to the dog and the monkey.

"Oh please! Without a proper coordinator and observant like me, you would be defeated in less than a minute."

"Nah man, never, I could fight against hundred Samurai and I'd kick all their asses."

"I want to see that."

"Wait for it, Inu, wait for it, I'm still pretty good." Sanageyama grins uppish. Houka nods with a smile, although he doesn't believe Sanageyamas words.

...

Fireworks explode. It's 8 PM. The bus stops, and Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui leave it.

"Wow! So this is a funfair?!" Senketsu asks.

"It is. If you got someone with you, they're fun as hell."

"And what's this big thing over there? This wheel?"

"A ferris wheel." Ryuko answers, while Satsuki and Nui walk to the funfair. The fair is surrounded by small walls, and it seems like today is a lot going on here.

"Usually, two friends or a couple take one of the small houses on it and sit down. Then the wheel slowly moves up and cycles around a few times and then you can leave it again. It's cool because you get a good view and you have some alone time." Ryuko answers and smiles.

"What are we waiting for then?! I want up there!" Senketsu says excited.

"Yeah I thought so. Aight, let's go." Ryuko reacts happy and follows her both companions into the fair. Ryuko notices how Satsuki takes a look at everything, while Nui runs to a small shooting range. The fair really looks great.

There is a huge statue in the middle of the fair, with a deer on it. A deer, because deers are an important symbol of Nara - the city even has a park with about one thousand deers inhabiting it, however, it's distant enough to not scare the animals off due to the fireworks. Around the statue, dozens of booths stand around. Snack shops, street food, souvenirs, games, pretty much everything you can expect from a fair, and in the far background behind the statue, there is the ferris wheel, which Senketsu watches curious.

"Well, there we are." Satsuki says. Ryuko nods. She pulls out her wallet and gives Ryuko a good amount of money.

"Here you go, sis. Should be enough for three visits, actually." Satsuki smiles.

"Thank you." So uh, Senketsu and I wanted to visit the ferris wheel and..."

"... and the big sister is not allowed to visit it." Satsuki grins. Ryuko blushes slightly.

"It's all good, Ryuko. Enjoy the evening with Senketsu."

"And what will you do?" Senketsu asks.

"Hm, I'll probably just look around and watch our troublemaker. Don't worry, I'll have enough stuff to keep myself entertained." Satsuki answers. Ryuko nods.

"Alright then, thanks again, Satsuki." Ryuko says and hugs Satsuki briefly, then starts exploring the funfair, passing by the many visitors, always having the ferris wheel in her sight which lightens up the sky with nice, red colors. There is a slight snow fall. Ryuko however notices a mirror maze and is instantly attracted by that. Seems like not many people are in there. It's confusing for sure as she enters it and looks around.

"I've never been in a mirror maze."

"This is interesting." Senketsu answers, and then, Ryuko walks against a mirror and starts laughing. Senketsu chuckles.

"Yeah... exactly." Ryuko grins.

A shot falls. Another target lands on the ground. Nui has a straw in her mouth and aims calm, but precisely at targets and shoots them one by one without problems. It certainly impresses the people around her, and as Satsuki arrives, she hits the last target.

"Impressive, young Lady!" the vendor mentions. Nui nods happy.

"Where did you learned these great shooting skills?"

"I like to hunt." Nui grins.

"You are a huntress? Interesting, you don't look like one."

"I prefer to hunt humans, you know?" Nui answers. The vendor raises her eyebrows.

"Ah, hunting down people in digital spaces, yes? Virtual reality, isn't it?"

"Uh... yeah, so to speak, just with more feelings." Nui smiles. The woman opens a closet with many nice presents.

"Choose anything you want, you've won after all." the female vendor then offers and waits patient. There aren't too many presents, but they all are unique - Souvenirs, coupons, plush toys, and so on.

"Seems boring to me." Nui reacts grinning and then looks to Satsuki. And suddenly, she has an idea.

"On the other hand, my dear companion and big si- uh, I mean... big friend Satsuki would LOVE to get a new teddy bear, riiiiiiiiight, Satsuki!?" Nui asks curious and points at a teddy bear. A big, brown, cuddly bear. The vendor gives the bear to Satsuki, who reacts irritated.

"Thank you. I think." Satsuki answers and puts the bear into her bag on the back. Following up, both women leave the booth.

"Alright, Satsuki! What great things should we do here? There are a lot of dark corners, we could kill someone! How about with a rifle? No one will notice, we will simply put out their lights! Get it, because of the dark corners?! I love it when you look at me like this!"

"Very funny indeed, Harime." Satsuki answers patient.

Ryuko leaves the mirror maze, obviously dizzy and confused, and Senketsu appears helpless as well, which is well visible because his eye rolls around the entire time.

"I'll never go into one of those anymore..." Ryuko grins and stands still.

"Better not!" her Kamui answers. Continuing their walk to the ferris wheel, they see a high striker near the wheel. Three men talk with each other and make some jokes about who can score highest. The high striker has twenty points - there are no prizes but it's free to use on the other hand.

"Man, you suck, Imma score now, watch this!" one man says and grabs the hammer with which he swings down onto the high striker, scoring 12 points. He nods satisfied.

"This is how it's done." he grins. The second man approaches the high striker and slams the hammer onto it - 16 points. And the third one scores 14. Briefly after, they notice Ryuko.

"Hey look, she seems impressed." one of the men grin. Ryuko hears them and laughs.

"Haha, yeah right, in your dreams." Ryuko chuckles and grabs the hammer.

"Imma show you how it's done, amateurs." Ryuko grins, with Senketsu watching curious. Ryuko slams the hammer onto the high striker, and the attraction lightens up. Twenty points. With a fat smiles, she turns to them.

"Anything else to say?" Ryuko asks.

"Bro, are you doing exercises?!"

"Nah, I've always ate my spinach on the plate. Including the plate." Ryuko winks and walks to the ferris wheel. The men look at each other confused.

"We gotta visit the gym more often..."

Finally, Ryuko arrives at the ferris wheel and pays a ticket at the booth.

"Alone, young lady?"

"Not entirely." Ryuko smiles and enters one of the little houses.

"Alright then. Enjoy the ride."

...

Satsuki and Nui look around at the funfair until Satsuki notices an open kitchen - street food. She saves this place up in her memory, it seems like a good place to have a tasty dinner. The food certainly smells good already, that's for sure. Nui however notices a booth with lots of tasty snacks and candies. Satsuki follows her. Many colorful and tasty looking candies lay here. Freshly made rice crackers, or Daifuku - these are small balls with filling, like strawberries, or gelatin.

"Hm, rice crackers. Haven't ate these in a long time." Satsuki thinks and grabs a package. They seem really good. And so, she buys one. As she turns to Nui, she notices how Nui pines with glimmering eyes towards the tasty popcorn bags at the corner of the booth.

"Harime?" Satsuki asks. Nui then turns to Satsuki, first irritated, then smiling.

"Yes, Satsuki!?"

"You alright?"

"Yes, of course, doofus!" Nui smiles and holds her arms behind her back. Satsuki nods and snacks a cracker while walking around. Nui follows Satsuki but looks back at the popcorn bags. She would normally just steal a package but if she starts trouble now, Neo-REVOCS will get aware of their location and the vendor probably would hide all the popcorn.

"Popcorn..." she mumbles with a pining voice.

Meanwhile, the ferris wheel slowly starts moving. Ryuko leans back and then puts off Senketsu. She still wears a nice T-shirt, she only did this so that Senketsu can move around freely. He jumps to the window and climbs up. After two minutes, the wheel stops moving, and both friends stand on top of the ferris wheel, watching the nice view. In the distance, the manors of Ôsaka are visible already. A few clouds cover up the sky, but you can see the stars well, and the moon shining. Nara mostly consists of small apartments and buildings, there isn't anything too special, but it has nice colors everywhere. Everything seems calm and quiet here.

"You ever been on a feerry wheel?" Senketsu asks. Ryuko shakes her head.

"No, not yet."

"Kind of nice here."

"Yeah." Ryuko answers and smiles warmly. Now that she doesn't wear Senketsu, she does notice the cold temparature, but it's still fine.

"So like... I always wondered about one thing." Ryuko mentions.

"Yes?"

"You... you told me you'd watch me. Every time I looked up to the sun, I knew you'd be there. But when the moon appeared, I always asked myself if... well, if you would sleep, you know? Just like me." Ryuko asks Senketsu careful, if wistful already.

"Hmm..."

"How... how was it?"

"... being dead?"

"... yeah." Ryuko slowly reacts shy. Senketsu thinks for a brief second, looking at the moon.

"Actually it... didn't hurt at all. It... felt like coming home. As if you would finish a long journey." he answers and looks up to Ryuko. Ryuko nods.

"I'm not scared anymore. If something happens and I have to go, I'll know everything will be alright, but... let's just say I prefer to stay here. It's nice. And yeah, I saw you indeed." he answers with a slightly higher pitch to express a smile.

"Really?"

"Yes. I was in an completely dark room. But here and there, I saw white fibers... and when I touched them, they transformed into small gates, and I could look through them. I can't really explain it, but... I saw you sitting in a bus, or coming back home from work while you looked at the sun. And when it became dark, I saw you sleeping too. You were tired. I just laid myself down next to you and we slept together. As if... nothing ever happened, I even had a proper body."

"Like a human?"

"No... it, it actually was Life Fibers. It was orientated on human bodies... hmm, it's hard to explain." he tries to answer.

"... crazy..."

"Mhm."

"So how did it felt? Having an own body?" Ryuko asks. Senketsu thinks.

"Weird, I believe. It was nice being able to walk around on my own, but on the other hand... it just felt weird, I, I didn't even wanted blood as usual, I... I felt good. Weird, but good." he answers. Ryuko sits down. Something bothers her apparently.

"Everything okay, Ryuko?" he asks and jumps to her.

"I'm... just happy to have you here. I've thought for a long time I could do it without you, and you know, it did work... until this, this sickness came. It destroyed so many lives... hell, it damaged mine as well. I haven't seen Mako for years now... I cried for days when I had to leave." she sighs.

"But I'm here now." he answers and climbs onto Ryuko, hugging her. Ryuko embraces the hug.

"I..."

"I'm so glad to have you. You're the best." Ryuko smiles and cuddles him. Senketsu feels so warm and comfortable. It truly feels good.

The evening continues quiet and relaxed. Ryuko and Senketsu watch the stars as the ferris wheel slowly drives down again, and Ryuko holds Senketsu up so he can watch them better. Satsuki and Nui wait for both friends down at the entrance of the ferris wheel. Ryuko wears Senketsu again.

"Heyyyyy!" Nui grins and holds her hand up for a High five which Ryuko denies.

"So what did you guys do?" Ryuko asks Satsuki.

"Not much. Having fun with Harime can be challenging, but it wasn't boring indeed."

"Sounds nice. I'm hungry."

"Me too. Come on. I saw a street food booth." Satsuki suggests. Ryuko and Nui follow Satsuki to the street food booth. It looks pretty neat. Okonomiyaki is offered here - basically various kinds of food, vegetables, meat and so on, fried and formed like a little cake. There is something for everyone. The group walks towards the vendor and orders something to eat, then they sit down and wait. After 20

minutes, their food is done, and it looks and tastes good. Ryuko ordered one with chicken meat, Satsuki has one only consisting of vegetables and Nui has one with some fish. They order a second meal as well, and after that, they travel back to the exit of the funfair. Although they're almost out of the funfair, Satsuki notices Nui is behind them, standing at the candy booth again, looking at the popcorn. She really wants that popcorn.

"Popcorn..." she mumbles curious. Satsuki walks behind her while Ryuko waits.

"Harime?" Satsuki asks and notices the popcorn.

"Alright..." Ryuko's big sister mumbles and walks to the vendor, sighing and then pointing at the popcorn.

"I'll take one small bag of popcorn, please." Satsuki orders and pays the popcorn. And then, Satsuki gives Nui the popcorn bag. With huge, happy eyes, Nui looks towards Satsuki. Satsuki notices how Nui's devil masks in her eyes increase slightly and appear more happier.

"Thank you, Satsuki." Nui says relieved and genuinely grateful. Satsuki nods.

"I hope you'll learn that it doesn't have to be the violent way to get what you want. A normal question and a genuine heart can make a huge difference, Harime." Satsuki teaches her and moves along. Nui smiles at Satsuki warmly and then smells the popcorn. It smells unbelievably great, and it crackles slightly too. The Grand Couturier happily dances after Satsuki and Ryuko. As the group leaves the fair, Satsuki walks to the next bus stop. Luckily, there is a bus that drives near the base, taking half an hour on foot from the bus stop near the bus stop up to the base itself. It's 9:10 PM now. Satsuki tries to sit down but then she hears Ryuko griping, and so, she turns around to her little sister. Raising her eyebrows in disbelief, she watches Nui sitting on top of the wall, munching popcorn one by one, calmly and with joy.

"Get down there already before I'll kick your ass!" Ryuko mocks. Nui doesn't react. She just eats popcorn.

"Hellohooo!" Ryuko yells. A few civilians watch Ryuko irritated and even more once they see Nui. Satsuki shakes her head and looks back to the street, closing her arms, watching the cars. But as the bus arrives, Nui jumps down and she and Ryuko meet up with Satsuki to enter the bus. As they sit down onto a place for four people, they watch Nui eating popcorn. She doesn't say a single thing. It's just her and the popcorn now, nothing else, and nothing will bother her until that bag is empty... and luckily it still takes a good amount of time until it's over since she eats slowly and with enjoyment.

"At least she's quiet." Ryuko mentions. Satsuki nods. With warm bellies thanks to the Okonomiyaki, the group relaxes in the quiet bus while it drives through the forests near Nara. There is still a slight snow fall. It's really relaxing.

"Must be good popcorn, hm?" Ryuko asks Satsuki. Nui smiles at Ryuko and Satsuki.

"I assume so." Satsuki answers. Nui takes out exactly one piece of popcorn for Satsuki and then for Ryuko. Both look confused at first but take it nonetheless. It tastes really nice indeed. And once again, it confuses them that Nui shares her snacks. Why would she do that?

"Th-thanks." Ryuko hesitates to answer. Nui smiles happy and continues eating. There's not much going on outside. Here and there a single car, but most people are at home already. At around 10:45 PM, the group arrives at the bus stop near the base. The bus stop is located at the entrance of a small village. The snow fall became stronger. The three women walk up a lesser driven path which is covered by snow already, with Satsuki and Ryuko following Nui who knows the way best. Yellow lights enlighten the path and the small forest. One could say they landed in some kind of christmas movie.

As they arrive at the huge gate of the base, they see a clone taking a nap under the roof.

"Wakey wakey!" Nui yells. The clone jumps up and salutes Nui, then opens the gates. The group enters the base. Empty, huge concrete corridors and tunnels await them. These tunnels probably have been used to transport various goods into the base with vehicles, that's how large the tunnels are. Pillars are here and there too. It feels a bit like a bunker. As Satsuki opens the door to the command center, she finds Hoomaru sitting on a chair, having her hands behind her head and her legs on the desk, while the clones clean up the entire facility. Ryuko and Nui follow up.

"Good evening, Hoomaru." Satsuki greets her employee.

"Good evening, Lady Satsuki. I'm surprised you hare here. Hello Ryuko, hello troublemaker."

"Heeeyyyyy, Hoomaru! Hanging around at this cool computer, hm? You should do something useful to make your existence worthwhile." Nui grins and eats her last bits of popcorn.

"Am I the one who eats popcorn?" Hoomaru asks cool.

"Clones! Get ready for bed time, my sweet hearts, and prepare two comfortable beds for my best girls Ryuko and Satsuki!"

"Of course, Miss Harime!" a clone jumps up happily, throws the mop away and runs to a different hall. Nui proceeds to visit the stitching halls and Ryuko follows the clone. Satsuki sits down next to Hoomaru.

"Interesting base." Satsuki comments.

"You never heard of it, correct?"

"No."

"Wouldn't have been worth talking about it anyway. We experimented on weapons here once, but it wasn't lucrative enough and so we stopped and simply added a stitching hall."

"I see."

"So how was your journey? I've heard you've been quite busy."

"Honestly... it was fine, at least for me. It was rather turbulent for my sister, especially because of her school as you may have heard about it, but she is alright thankfully. Her Kamui cares for her... although I still doubt on Senketsu highly. She had a lot of head aches recently, something she usually did not had. This occurs since she has the Kamui. I suppose it's not synchronized with her, or she can't really wear it anymore."

"Then you should ask Nui about it. Your friend Iori might have experience, but only Nui knows absolutely every secret about Life Fibers. After all, she is one herself."

"Nui and I both agree that something is up with the Kamui. I should ask her sometime. Ryuko won't like that though."

"Yes."

"... other than that, it was rather amusing. We've visited this national park near Tokyo, you said you wanted to visit it sometime, correct?"

"Fuji Hakone Izu?! I always wanted to visit it, yes! It would be the first destination of my two month vacation." Hoomaru answers excited.

"It is quite interesting there. I suggest however you go during the summer time, around winter it is rather... cool there." Satsuki smiles. Hoomaru chuckles briefly.

"Well that is the plan." Satsuki's secretary answers. Her boss yawns.

"You should go to bed. The clones will clean the base a bit. Nudist Beach was here and took a part of the goods here already. It might

take a day or two until we are done with the base, but so far it looks good. For now, you should go to bed though and relax. The beds here are comfortable." Hoomaru suggests.

"I will. Thank you, Hoomaru. Good night." Satsuki answers and stands up. Briefly after, the lights in the base slowly go out. A few clones patrol the area and the various tunnels of the base. Slowly but steady, it's getting quiet in the huge bunker like base...

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The next day...

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Transporters with Samurai and Ashigaru drive through Nara. In the middle of the small army of Neo-REVOCS consisting of dozens of soldiers, a huge black command transporter drives. It looks like a normal one, however, it is mostly black and there are red and white lines on the edges. In the transport room, Masaru watches everything happening outside, as the walls inside the room are transparent - while no one can see what happens inside, people inside the room can see everything outside. With a calm, but excited look he waits for the army to arrive at the REVOCS base.

...

Breakfast has started in the REVOCS base. Ryuko, Satsuki, Nui and Hoomaru sit at a little table in the command center. The clones are working at the moment. It's 11 AM now. Since they have arrived near Ôsaka, it's not necessary to wake up early anymore. Satsuki notices that Ryuko looks pretty tired, tired than usual. Nui and Hoomaru sit on the left side of the table, Ryuko and Satsuki on the right side. Satsuki enjoys her Miso soup - a Miso soup is part of a japanese breakfast.

"So you made this soup, yes, Hoomaru?" Satsuki asks curious.

"Yes. Do you like it?" Hoomaru asks and grabs a small piece of grilled fish.

"It's impressive." Satsuki answers satisfied.

"You guys need to know that Hoomaru likes to cook! Sadly that's where her use already ends, hahaha! Isn't it so, sweet Hoomaru?" Nui asks happy and eats some fish.

"Man, how can you survive this asshole every day, Hoomaru?" Ryuko asks annoyed. She really sounds angry today. Something has happened this night probably.

"I know Nui since she was born. You'll get used to it fairly quick actually. It has a few advantages too, she would never kill you since you are too valuable for her. However, she likes to insult and make someone feel bad."

"And why?"

"She was always psychopathic." Hoomaru answers.

"Great, but you gotta listen to her shit the entire time."

"Well, like I said, you'll get used to it." Hoomaru answers. Ryuko nods. Satsuki thinks and moves the spoon in the soup around. Nui notices that.

"Satsuki, my love, you seem so thoughtful, do you want to become a philosopher?" Nui asks grinning.

"I wanted to ask you something for quite some time already." Satsuki answers.

"Uuuuhh."

"This man, Ichiro, he... he talked about something called the... 'High Entity.'" Do you happen to know something about it?" Satsuki asks curious.

Suddenly, Nui stops, just like Hoomaru. Nui's spoon falls into the bowl. Hoomaru appears unsettled suddenly. Even the clones watch Satsuki carefully now, and with cold face expressions. Satsuki watches Nui closely with a serious look. Ryuko seems annoyed. Slowly, Nui makes a fist with her hand.

"... why do you want to know that... Satsuki?" Nui asks, emphasizing her name.

"I want to know who we are fighting against." Satsuki answers cold. Both look at each other with piercing eye contact. Nui's devil masks in her eyes smile very weird suddenly, and single Life Fibers move to them.

"The hive mind of the Life Fibers." Nui answers. Satsuki waits.

"And what is that?"

"You can't imagine that. The High Entity... cannot be explained. It has to be seen with your own eyes, and even then, you as a stupid human will never fully understand the look of this... being."

"Don't you dare calling Satsuki a stupid human, asshole." Ryuko threatens evil.

"It's because of the High Entity that there is a Doppelgänger of me."

"A Doppelgänger, it is. Tell me more." Satsuki answers interested. Nui stands up and slowly walks around.

"Every time a Life Fiber dies, it will come back to the High Entity. It is a... huge ball, so to speak, like the primordial Life Fiber, and our home." Nui starts to explain and walks to Ryuko, touching her shoulders.

"It's your home and the one of your Kamui too." Nui continues and then walks into the middle of the room. She pulls out a few Life Fibers and severs them.

"Life Fibers that die will come back to this home, unable to start a new life, as their power has left them. But their memories... their memories stay, and so, they will continue to live in their own way. It is the last time they will have a body, and after that, they will become a single Fiber. We Life Fibers have a body you humans would be scared off." Nui explains and carefully rips off a part of the skin on her hand, revealing not blood or organs, but... but an orange skin, with red Life Fibers moving onto it. It looks scary.

"Isn't it beautiful?" Nui asks and holds her hand up. A few drops of blood leave the skin under the orange hand.

"My Doppelgänger and I however, and the Entity, we are... exceptions to this rule of becoming a single Life Fiber." Nui explains furthermore and then her face expression changes to a smile.

"Once I was chosen by the Life Fibers to serve Lady Ragyo and to lead her plans to success. And it would have worked if it wouldn't have been for Ryuko. I loved Ragyo. She understood me. She was there for me. I did absolutely everything for her. And I loved every single moment of it. When I killed your dad, I enjoyed it. When I killed people for Ragyo, I laughed about it. When I tortured someone to get information, I did it with patience and entertainment. And when I sacrificed my life for my beloved mother, it was the greatest feeling I ever experienced." Nui smiles euphorical. Satsuki swallows. Hoomaru stays quiet.

"It's as if I would have finally come back home. I loved my life. It was beautiful. All the love I received from everyone, even from you guys, it all led to this specific moment where I finally decapitated myself and ended all of it, knowing that when I will be back, the High Entity will be proud of me and grant me a place at her side, and... and I would have granted both of you a place as well. I loved you all. Especially you." Nui explains with even more euphoria, looking directly into Ryuko's eyes.

"And then... then everything fell apart. They threw me away. I wasn't good enough. My ultimate goal, Shinra Koketsu, has failed. And my

death became worthless. You made me a weakling. And the High Entity banished me, to make a copy of myself, that is stronger than anything on this world... and it is."

"So that is the reason why you fight the Life Fibers? Because they banished you?" Satsuki asks. Nui nods.

"Imagine you live and serve for one purpose. You sacrifice yourself for that purpose, and then, everything you did was for nothing. I hate humans. Every one of them. But... I do love you and Ryuko. The more you hate me, the more you want me to die, the more I believe you guys really love me. That is how love works after all." Nui smiles.

"However, I would have never thought I would hate Life Fibers more than humans." she chuckles.

"And you deserved this fate." Ryuko says ice cold.

"Oh yes?"

"Yeah. Your stupid smile, your constant "jokes," the deaths you caused, the cruelties... you deserved all of this shit. Must've felt fucking bad to lose everything you had, huh?" Ryuko asks angry.

"Mhm, but I got you two lovely girls."

"Satsuki and me?" Ryuko asks and stands up.

"Ryuko, calm down." Senketsu says as he notices that Ryuko slowly cooks up.

"You're even happy about your own damn death, as if you could rubble yourself one off by that! You even listen to yourself?!" Ryuko asks and holds her hands on the table.

"Uh, buhu, Ryuko is mean to me, Satsuki!" Nui grins. Suddenly, Ryuko walks around the table and walks towards Nui.

"I've had it with you stupid clown!" Ryuko threatens and punches Nui in the face. The clones draw their needle blades by that. Satsuki and Hoomaru stand up and approach the arc enemies.

"You think you're so clever, huh!? Could insult all of us and think you get away with that. Talk about how great you are but lose nonetheless and then start crying about how your oh so great High fucking Entity pranked you over and send you to a place you probably deserved to stay at! You're so god damn annoying to even THINK about!" Ryuko yells.

"Ryuko, calm down, seriously, don't do anything stupid now!" Senketsu begs. Two clones walk towards Ryuko, but she just punches them away and hits Nui in the face once again. She smiles.

"Because of you I lost my best friend Mako! Because of you and this damn Life Fiber sickness my life got worse! Then you killed my dad and dozens of people! And now there is a SECOND asshole like you that breaks my damn arm and almost kills Satsuki!?" Ryuko yells. Nui laughs.

"Cry some more, Ryuko!" Nui grins. Ryuko suddenly draws the scissor blades, enhances them and slams them against Nui, punching her against the command center desks, where the computers are on.

"Calm down, god damn it, Ryuko!" Satsuki orders and grabs Ryuko, but Ryuko simply continues and leaves Satsuki back. Nui chuckles as she looks into Ryuko's mad face.

"How much of a use can YOU be, huh!? I'm so sick of this constant smiling! I'm so sick of you!" Ryuko screams.

"Aww, are you..."

"SHUT UP ALREADY!" Ryuko screams and slams Nui with the scissor blades against the breakfast table.

"FIRST YOU TAKE MY FATHER AWAY AND NOW YOU THINK YOU COULD TAKE MAKO AWAY AS WELL!?"

"But I haven't even..." Nui tries to answer and is then punched into her clones with the scissor blades that were trying to help their mistress. The clones shrink. Nui looks up dizzy and see's her dead clones, then, Ryuko attacks. Nui dodges and tries to crouch away but Ryuko grabs her with a few strings of Life Fibers.

"No!" Nui screams shocked and is thrown into the air. Ryuko hits Nui with the scissor blades. Nui flies against the wall and slams onto it, then she falls down. Satsuki drags Ryuko to her.

"Are you done now!?" Satsuki asks angry, but Ryuko punches Satsuki away and walks towards Nui who slowly tries to stand up. Ryuko kicks Nui into her face and rams the scissor blades directly next to her neck.

"NO WAIT!" Nui yells scared. Ryuko looks deeply into Nui's eyes.

"You seem scared, Nui."

Nui doesn't answer.

"What's wrong?"

"..."

"Afraid of dying?" Ryuko asks. Hoomaru grabs a REVOCS standard fiber rifle and aims at Ryuko.

"Let her go." Hoomaru threatens Ryuko. Satsuki holds her Katana ready.

"Leave it, Ryuko." Satsuki orders. Ryuko leans her head more down.

"ANSWER ME ALREADY YOU FUCK!"

"YES I AM SCARED!" Nui answers scared. Ryuko grins.

"Let. Her. Go." Hoomaru orders and aims precisely onto Ryuko's head.

"Why shouldn't I just kill you now, Nui, hm?" Ryuko asks quiet. Nui doesn't know how to answer.

"Exactly... there is no reason not to kill you now."

"... please don't do this." Nui begs.

"Are you scared of me?"

Suddenly, the monitors turn on. Hoomaru and Satsuki look to them. It's Masaru.

"Your conversation is almost to laugh about if I wouldn't be so busy with you guys." Masaru chuckles. Nui raises her eye brows, and Ryuko looks surprised as well.

"Mr. Yamamoto, still part of REVOCS, yes?" Hoomaru asks.

"Absolutely, unlike you, Ms. Hoomaru. Other than you, I still see the benefits of this corporation. Benefits Miss Kiryuin would have never used. I'll give you five minutes before this base is destroyed." Masaru grins evil and disconnects. Explosions are audible, the ground shatters, and stones fall from the ceiling. Ryuko sighs.

"Lucky you, little crybaby." Ryuko reacts and pulls the scissor blades out of the ground. Nui breathes for air several times due to the shock and stands up, as Ryuko and Satsuki run into the tunnels.

"You alright, Nui?" Hoomaru asks worried, giving Nui her rifle. Nui takes the weapon annoyed, but doesn't answer.

"No problem, Hoomaru, thank you, Hoomaru, I'm so glad I have you, Hoomaru." Hoomaru mumbles sarcastic and follows the others with a second fiber rifle she had around in the room.

Ryuko transforms into Senketsu Azami and follows Satsuki through the tunnels, seeing the first Ashigaru on the entrance firing at the sisters. Ryuko and Satsuki take cover behind the pillars, however, their cover won't last long as the Anti Life Fiber bullets pierce through the pillars easily.

"Their bullets can take you down, Ryuko." Satsuki mentions.

"I know." Ryuko answers and looks out. Bullets fly around her. Suddenly, shots are fired behind them. Nui, Hoomaru and three other clones fire at the Ashigaru, drawing their fire onto them. By that, Ryuko and Satsuki are able to advance. Satsuki parries bullets with her Katana while Ryuko drags Ashigaru gunners with Life Fiber strings to her. Satsuki then slashes the Ashigaru in the air. More explosions occur, looks like Neo-REVOCS wants to destroy the entire base and the cliffs on it. Samurai enter the tunnel and start duels against the sisters, while Nui, her clones and Hoomaru follow the group, keeping the Ashigaru off on shooting their melee fighters. The rest of the Neo-REVOCS soldiers notice that the group is capable of fighting back, and as they see dozens of clones, armed with needle blades approaching the entrance, covered by Ryuko, Satsuki, Nui and Hoomaru, they retreat back to the parking lot. The group reaches the entrance and as they leave the base, they notice a few clones fighting against Samurai and Ashigaru already. They patrolled outside the base. And then, the black transporter opens and Masaru appears, leaving it.

"Satsuki Kiryuin, it's been FAR too long since we met each other, but FINALLY, the time has come to face off each other!" Masaru laughs. Ryuko, Satsuki, Nui and Hoomaru watch him.

"You, as the righteous heir of the REVOCS empire should know best this world is a sad place and that we have to do everything to make it a better place. Dreams will become reality once we fight for them! The Director of Neo-REVOCS has learned this valuable lesson, and so did I, and now I am here to teach you and your friends this lesson as well! Let us dream of a better world! And let us dream of your nightmares!" Masaru laughs and activates his Goku-Uniform. Life

Fibers transform, red lights appear, fly through the air, then, Masaru's entire body is covered in black. Red Life Fibers display the three stars on his torso, and on the side of his arms, red plates are visible. Life Fibers move through the armor everywhere, especially at the legs and on the upper head that looks like a helmet. His face is still well visible though.

THREE STAR GOKU UNIFORM

DREAMER REGALIA

Hoomaru and Nui reload their rifle annoyed. Suddenly, Masaru summons Life Fibers with his hands which materialize into the air and then slam into the ground. Ryuko and Nui rush towards Masaru while Satsuki and Hoomaru keep their head low. Both Satsuki and Hoomaru flank him. Around them, the battle goes on, with the clones rushing out of the facility and attacking the Samurai and Ashigaru. Weirdly enough, the ground glows up red, and then it explodes, causing smoke to appear and snow to whirl up. Ryuko and Nui dodge. It seems like as if Masaru enjoys his new abilities granted by the uniform. Ryuko throws Life Fiber Strings towards Masaru, but Masaru grabs them and drags Ryuko to him, then punching her into her face with his fist. He moans himself due to the pain.

"Argh, damn it." he mumbles annoyed and drags Life Fibers out of his hands which he then uses to punch Ryuko in the smoke. Ryuko falls into it, Life Fibers drag her deeper into the smoke and then, Masaru jumps onto the transporter. As Ryuko stands up, her sight is getting worse, and she even coughs blood.

"What... the fuck..." she mumbles and crouches exhausted all of a sudden. Nui shoots at Masaru, but Masaru's uniform is resistant against the bullets. They won't penetrate it.

"Eh, how annoying." Nui mumbles and thinks, but suddenly, smoke rises up behind her, and Life Fibers drag her into it. Satsuki notices something is up with Ryuko and runs to her, leaving Masaru behind who's approaching Hoomaru now.

"Are you alright, Ryuko!?" Satsuki asks worried.

"Ma... ko... Mako..." Ryuko mumbles confused.

"Mako!?" she reacts perplexed. Suddenly, she can hear Nui screaming full of panic, and she even let's her weapon fall. She just sits on the ground, afraid of whatever is going on right now. Satsuki approaches Masaru for answers.

"Hey, Yamamoto!" Satsuki yells. Masaru turns to Satsuki and smiles, then he jumps down to her. Both are at the parking lot right now, with clones and Ashigaru fighting around them.

"I'm sure you're wondering what this great Goku-Uniform is capable of, yes? How does it feel if your own creations and ideas are used against you?" he asks pretentious.

"I rather ask myself how a foolish coward like you haven't fought against me yet. This personal vendetta of your's is remarkably ridiculous."

"Hah!" he laughs and attacks Satsuki with Life Fiber strings that suddenly appear in the air - long, single Life Fibers that can penetrate most armors easily. Satsuki dodges them as the attacks cannot be countered with her armor or the Katana she wields.

"The Dreamer Regalia represents the ultimate weapon in psychological combat! You and your both companions might be able to fight off physical bodies, but you cannot fight against what happens in your mind! You can only try to survive that!" Masaru laughs.

"MAKO!" Ryuko screams. Around her, dozens of Nui Harime clones with black Life Fiber arms fight off against Nudist Beach soldiers. While she can see where Satsuki, Hoomaru and the actual Nui are, fire is everywhere, and screams are audible.

"MAKO!" she continues and then is suddenly attacked by a Nui Harime clone. Ryuko tries to defend herself with the scissor blades.

"TIME TO PLAY, SWEETHEART!" the clone laughs. In truth, Ryuko fights against a Samurai.

"Whoever suffers from the effects of the Fiber Smoke will perceive a distorted reality! A reality based on the memories of the individual, combined with the Life Fiber sickness!" he grins and attacks once more with the Life Fiber strings. Satsuki dodges.

"Mama!?" Nui asks confused and stands up. Strong rain falls from the sky, thunders are audible, it's cloudy and around Nui, her clones fight against dozens of Life Fiber beings, and on top of the black transporter, a cross with Ragyo's decapitated body hangs there, and above her, the High Entity.

"MAMA, NO!" Nui screams and tries to reach the transporter but is attacked by Ichiro Harime all of a sudden.

"You look fantastic today, my love, would you like to play?" Ichiro asks curious. Nui crouches away.

"NO! I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK THERE! LEAVE ME ALONE!" Nui reacts panicking. In this case, it is a Samurai as well she would fight against.

"It truly is a great weapon, isn't it, Miss Kiryuin!?" Masaru grins.

"What a ridiculous way of seeking powers, Mr. Yamamoto, you are out of your mind!" Satsuki reacts and throws her Katana against Masaru which he catches, however, Satsuki uses it as a jump kick and so, she can kick Masaru away. Hoomaru fires at the Samurai who tries to attack Ryuko. She can't defeat him, but she can keep him off of Ryuko. Ryuko then uses the time to incapacitate the Samurai, even though she is still dizzy and coughs blood. Satsuki performs several precise attacks against Masaru, but he blocks all of them with Life Fiber strings.

"Put more effort into this, Ms. Kiryuin, you will not win by this!" Masaru reacts uppish. He feels to superior in his uniform that it disgusts Satsuki.

"You fawn for clothing like a starving pig for food! Know your place, fool!" she yells and rubs the inner left glove on her hand onto the blade. She's not hurting herself by that as the glove she wears protects her from damage. Life Fibers enter the blade and burn into the Katana, then it lightens up in blue briefly. Masaru looks surprised.

EMPRESS' BLADE - ANNIHILATION MODE

Suddenly, Satsuki swings her Katana three times with as much power as she can towards Masaru. Huge blue waves appear and slam Masaru against a transporter which then explodes. He's send into the air. Satsuki approaches Masaru as he falls down again. Hoomaru fires against the Samurai that tries to attack Nui. The clones however fail to keep the invaders off the base. Ashigaru with huge crates full of explosive materials enter the facility. Field cannons fire at the base as well. Masaru seems to regain control while falling and lands rather stable on the ground again, then, smoke appears. Life Fibers drag Satsuki into it. Satsuki coughs and looks around as her sight slowly changes.

Around her, Nudist Beach soldiers fight against COVERS of REVOCS, and around her, dozens of Ragyo's watch her with a tired smile, as if she would be a little child. Unsure, Satsuki looks around. The illusions walk towards Satsuki and try to attack her, but Satsuki can dodge them - after all, she cannot be hit too often by them, otherwise she will be knocked unconscious. She also notices a person completely covered in black near the parking lot - it's Masaru. Ryuko and Nui gain their sanity back and look around.

"The hell was that?" Senketsu asks Nui and Ryuko.

"You've felt that too?" Ryuko asks.

"Life Fibers sewn by my Doppelgänger! He made this Goku-Uniform! This smoke is dangerous!" Nui comments and reloads her weapon, then joins Hoomaru who tries to hit Masaru. Ryuko tries to attack Masaru.

"Hey, you jerk!" Ryuko yells at Masaru and wallruns on a transporter. Masaru looks over to Ryuko.

"Eat this!" she screams and jumps from the wall down onto the ground, ramming the scissor blades into the ground and thus, causing explosions in front of her. Masaru dodges quickly and summons more Life Fiber strings. He hits Ryuko with one string but she can continue without problems.

"I got an idea, Ryuko! Once he uses his smoke, use the ground attack!" Senketsu mentions. Ryuko nods and runs to Masaru, attacking him, but he can dodge once more.

"Missed me, Matoi!" Masaru grins. Suddenly, Masaru gets hit in the back, then Nui laughs happily.

"But that was a clear hit, little security boy!" Nui grins. Annoyed by that, Masaru activates the smoke again by ramming Life Fibers into the ground, but just as the ground explodes and the smoke rises up, Ryuko counters with a ground attack by the scissor blades. The explosions caused by that hurl the smoke into Masaru's direction. Life Fibers catch Masaru, and then he starts to whimper scared. Satsuki appears annoyed and with a wound on her torso due to the Fiber smoke.

"You lack resolve and tactical knowledge, Yamamoto!" Satsuki yells and uses Annihilation Mode to attack Masaru. She hits him with the blue waves and slams him into the base, which practically explodes due to the Ashigaru delivering explosive crates into the facility. By that, he flies into the air as a huge smoke wave covers the entire area, whirling up the snow and moving the trees slightly.

"WOAH WOAH WOAH!" Masaru yells panicking. Nui and Hoomaru shoot at Masaru, causing him to fly even higher, and as he falls down, Ryuko punches Masaru with the scissor blades towards Satsuki. Satsuki slashes her Katana several times in the air, and so, blue waves appear once more, hitting Masaru and letting him fly back to Ryuko who then finishes the battle with her scissor blades.

SEN-I-SOSHITSU

Masaru's Goku-Uniform explodes into thousands of pieces and he falls naked onto the ground, but luckily into a huge pile of snow. He moans painful and tries to stand up, then Nui kicks him onto the ground again, aiming her rifle at him. Ryuko, Satsuki and Hoomaru join Nui, all with an annoyed look.

"Uhm... that's embarrassing now." he mumbles unsettled and blushes.

"So what are we going to do with Mr. Yamamoto?" Hoomaru asks the others.

"We should kill him." Nui grins.

"Nah, leave it, Nui, this guy is scared shitless. Shit, he probably doesn't even know one hundred percent who he's working for." Ryuko mentions.

"I agree." Hoomaru says.

"Killing him won't help us. Maybe he'll reconsider his entire beliefs in Neo-REVOCS if we let him go." Senketsu thinks.

"Let him go." Satsuki orders. Nui rolls with her eyes and unlocks the weapon.

"Why can't we just shoot him? It's much more fun that way!" Nui grins. Satsuki grabs Nui's rifle and throws it away. Nui looks up confused.

"With an attitude like this, your life will find an ending sooner than you wish to, Harime. Not everyone who is defeated has to be killed." Satsuki explains.

"Doesn't make any sense to me." Nui answers.

"Because you can't see the sense in it due to your endless narcissism and psychopathy. It's not even your fault. A person that is born with psychopathic tendencies will never be able to fully comprehend empathy, or mercy." Satsuki explains. Nui rolls with her eyes and grabs her weapon.

"Fine, fine, alright, stand up, Masaru!" Nui grins and grabs Masaru. She gives him a few pieces of severed clothes of an Ashigaru so that he at least can cover the crotch area. Masaru takes them.

"Hush! Come on! Go on, before I'll reconsider what Satsuki said!" Nui smiles.

"T-t-thank you... !" he mumbles and runs to the next Neo-REVOCS transporter which he escapes with. Most clones are fine after the battle, but the Neo-REVOCS units have been defeated or are retreating entirely. Masaru didn't put the clothes on by the way.

"Is he driving naked now?" Nui grins.

"Oh man." Senketsu answers ashamed by that idea. The group looks up to the destroyed base.

"Well... so much about the other goods in the base." Hoomaru comments.

"Let's go back to Nudist Beach. I want to sleep." Satsuki answers. The group enters a Neo-REVOCS car and drives away.

...

...

...

Life Fibers dissolve on the place where Ryuko coughed blood...

AN: Thanks for reading this chapter! Please leave a review if you liked it, it would highly motivate me! :) We'll see us again when Nui has to enter the Neo-REVOCS HQ for Houka Inumuta in Chapter 12 - "But You Were The Greatest Failure!" Have a great day! :)

But You Were The Greatest Failure

AN: Welcome to the next chapter. After this chapter I will be able to upload the next one next week, but after that I have school again and then I gotta see when new chapters will arrive. I assume they'll be uploaded every two weeks then unless I have enough time. Also, OneRandomFiber, you still here and reading? :D I miss you ^^

It's night. Ryuko sits on the terrace. The moon shines, and the sky is clear. Wind howls quiet and the trees rustle a bit. She sighs and sits down on a chair, watching the sky some more. The young woman wears her usual jacket which she also wore when she visited the Honnouji Academy. Then she hears Mako's dog Guts walking to her, showing his tongue, looking at Ryuko curious. She smiles and grabs him, putting him onto her lap. Guts wants to be pet, it seems.

"Hey, buddy." she smiles, while he licks her hand.

"At least you are here. How... how's Mako doing?" Ryuko asks careful. Guts presses his head briefly on her. She chuckles.

"... I suppose that's a yes." she reacts relieved, even though disappointment can be heard well.

"Mako promised me a date and I destroyed it... all because of this... this illusion... shit..." she mumbles and shakes her head. Guts licks her face.

"He-hey!" she chuckles. Steps are audible. Ryuko slowly puts Guts down, and then, Ryuko feels a hand on her shoulder. It feels cold.

"Half a year, love?" Nui asks curious. Ryuko cannot move. A small fire can be seen in the forest.

"How... the hell...?" Ryuko wonders as she sees Nui. Nui walks to the fence at the terrace and leans at it.

"You know, Ryuko, just because I'm dead it doesn't mean I'm gone. But... I can tell you miss me."

"Why would I miss you, you..."

"Because I'm a part of you, just like your stupid Satsuki and Mako. I always thought you are a fighter, it would be hilarious if you would stop now! And besides, everything is more fun when I'm here."

"Maybe I don't like the kind of fun you're trying to spread."

"Nwa, I don't think so. I know you want to fight me. How's Mako doing?" Nui grins.

"Be careful."

"I think the way she cried was unbelievably hilarious! "Buhuhuhu, Ryuko, you are SO mean to me!" It would have been even more funny if you would have chopped her arms off just like me! Then again, she would have died then, haha!" Nui laughs. Ryuko tries to move.

"And when you hit her face she really must've felt bad!"

"You..."

"Look, people, the little Ryuko actually hit her girlfriend, ahahaha! And I'm the bad guy here!? You're so silly!"

"GET OVER HERE YOU!" Ryuko screams and stands up.

Satsuki wakes up Ryuko.

"Calm down, Ryuko, it's just a nightmare!" Satsuki says to Ryuko in her room. It's 9:20 AM. Ryuko shakes her head and takes a jug from her water bottle while Senketsu climbs onto Ryuko's bed.

"Oh man..." she mumbles.

"Everything's alright." Satsuki continues and sits down. Her little sister stands up and walks to the bathroom to clean her face.

"I've been trying to wake her up but it didn't worked." Senketsu answers.

"No worries."

"Hm, okay..." he answers and then both wait a bit. They can hear the sink.

"Did you knew there is a difference between the wall in your own room and the wall in a... hotel, for example?" he suddenly mentions. Satsuki looks at him confused.

"Explain."

"The wall here feels much better and warmer than the walls in a hotel. It's because as a... ahem, suit, I can get used to the wall."

"Makes sense."

"Everything alright?"

"... I still do not fully understand why Ryuko has so many headaches recently."

"She has them since I'm here, correct?"

"Yes."

"If it helps, Iori can take a look at me once again. I would notice it if something isn't correct with me."

"You would notice it? Well... it's good to see you are concerned as well."

"Ryuko is my family." he answers. Satsuki nods slightly and smiles.

"And I'm glad you care for her. She always feels comfortable when you are around her."

"Me too, to be honest. Although she still behaves stubborn sometimes."

"She does, but she did change thanks to you." Satsuki smiles genuine and stands up. Ryuko appears. After putting Senketsu on, both sisters go to the canteen where they meet up with a few friends - Mikisugi, Houka, Nonon and Iori. After the fight yesterday, both women took the day off. It was a long journey after all. Houka works eagerly at his laptop, his food is getting cold already. Satsuki talks to him.

"You seem very focused on your laptop once again, Houka, what is the reason for it?" she asks interested.

"Programming a trojan." he answers. His glasses reflect the command lines on the laptop. Nonon doesn't have a single clue on what is happening on the screen and then she shrugs.

"I'll explain later." he continues. Satsuki nods.

"Man, am I glad we are here again, and I never thought I'd say that in THIS place." Ryuko grins. Mikisugi chuckles.

"You'll never lose your shame regarding nudity, hm?"

"Well I mean, I was in a strip club, so uh..."

"Naked 24, I heard about it, good place, I've been there twice. Most people got out of it and escaped luckily. Good to see you guys are well too." he answers. Satsuki sips some of the european tea she brought from Fuji.

"Jakuzure told me she would prepare a little concert but she has some difficulties with the men." he continues.

"For real! They are annoying! It can't be that hard to use a drum properly, damn it!"

"That reminds me, Mikisugi..." Satsuki mentions. Mikisugi looks at Satsuki.

"Hm?"

"Could we maybe get a popcorn machine?"

"What?"

...

An hour later, Hoomaru and Nui sit in a small interrogation room. Hoomaru listens to Nui.

"I mean, it's pretty much this, lil Hoomaru: without Lady Ragyo, what should I do now? I don't have any purpose in living! Sure, shooting humans here and there might be funny but it get's boring!"

"I suppose life is what you make out of it."

"How philosophical, Hoomaru, it doesn't make you smarter."

"Might be that this sounds too high for you, but my view stays. There are so many things in the world you could do and have fun with, without hurting dozens of people, and there probably are even more reasons you could dedicate your life for. In my case, it's nature. Finding out how people live in other parts of the world... that's what I think is interesting and that's how I want to spend my life."

"Sounds really boring! I'd rather hurt humans."

"Why exactly humans?"

"Do you see any Life Fibers around here?" she grins.

"Fair enough."

"See, little fool?"

"Well... I could see a way how to find a purpose in your live, but you won't like it."

"Uuuh. Tell me!" Nui jumps up and leans her head to Hoomaru.

"You should work on yourself. On your entire personality. Learn that it doesn't make sense hating humans in their entirety. Become a better person that is not hated by everyone. Even psychopaths can learn. I know that." Hoomaru reacts with a cold look. Nui looks confused.

"Oh, Hoomaru, I AM beloved by everyone and those who hate me, well, I'll just kill them, they are worthless anyway, just like pretty much everyone in this super sweet facility full of naked boys and girls. And besides: why am I a psychopath?" she grins irritated.

"You can't even realize yourself you are one, hm? Thought so. Nui, why do you even want to talk with me? In the end it's always the same. You tell me that something bothers you, like dying, or not having a purpose in life, then I give you a suggestion and you decline it. We're running in circles."

"I just love to spent time with my favourite human!"

"I thought Satsuki and Ryuko are your favourite humans?"

"They are the ones who are better than everyone, I don't count them as humans per se, they're great, lovely, SUPER sexy... I mean, have you seen Ryuko's bre..."

"Alright, Nui, I think I've heard enough." Hoomaru interrupts and stands up. The door opens, Tsumugu appears.

"Hey, Life Fiber, we need you in the command center in five minutes, move it." Tsumugu orders annoyed just by looking at Nui.

"Eh, and what if I don't want to?" she asks sassy.

"I don't care, now go before I'll get angry."

"I like angry people." Nui smiles and passes by Tsumugu, holding her hand at his cheek, then leaving the room briefly after.

"How do you manage to survive this nuisance?" Tsumugu asks perplexed.

"Just say what Nui wants to hear and you can get along with her." Hoomaru answers and leaves the room with Tsumugu briefly after.

...

"No, no, no!" Nonon gripes angry about her musicians. They're desperately trying to use instruments like drums or flutes properly.

"Even a little child can handle the drums better than you, you idiot!" Nonon continues to rant and shakes her head, then sitting down on a chair. She and the musicians are in the main hall of the huge base, standing on a pedestal. The men and women try to play some music, however, they fail spectacularly.

"You know what? Go, please! Nothing against you guys, but you are unbelievably bad!" Nonon then orders, waving her hands to them, and as a result, the "musicians" leave briefly after. They aren't even angry about it, after all, Nonon is pretty serious about music.

"This'll never end well..." the woman then mumbles and suddenly hears Nui approaching her.

"What never ends well?" she grins curious. Nonon doesn't answer. Nui looks at all the instruments curiously and uses the drum briefly, making a sound.

"You seem really angry, love. Heard bad music again? Did you really expected these humans can do music?!" the psychopath chuckles.

"I mean there's no one else to ask for." Nonon answers and thinks, looking at the instruments. Nui tries to play the flute. It sounds alright

- with some work it could actually sound good. She definitely hits the right tones. And that brings Nonon on an idea.

"Heeeyy..." she reacts to Nui.

"Hm?"

"So like, you're the absolute best in everything I heard, right?"

"Everything BUT nothing!"

"Can your weird clones of your's play music as well?"

"Yes they can, they can do everything I can!"

"Mind if I can get some of them? It can't get any worse after all."
Nonon grins.

"Oooooooh, sounds funny, how about no? As if I would give you my clones!"

"Well, you like to annoy people just like me, do you?"

"Yes."

"Then it would be a win-win situation. Your clones will annoy everyone with my knowledge about music, and I can perform the concert I've planned... hopefully. If your clones don't mess it up."
Nonon suggests. Nui lays down the flute and thinks. She got a point there.

"Hmmm..."

"Come on, I know you'll enjoy my performance. And everyone will "enjoy" the performance of your clones. After all, they are you, just several times."

"That is true." Nui answers and grabs a few clones out of her pocket, giving them to Nonon. Eight clones, to be exact.

"If something happens to them, I'll kill you, alright?" Nui smiles. Nonon smiles and nods.

"That won't happen, sweetie."

"Haha! I like you." Nui chuckles and moves on. Nonon looks at the clones.

"Well that was easier than I thought. Now let's see if you guys can actually make music."

...

Meanwhile, Houka planned a small report in the command center. He uploaded a data which is projected by the holo table as a hologram. Satsuki, Ryuko, Mikisugi and Iori are in the room.

"Now, Inumuta, you said something about a trojan?" Mikisugi asks and watches Houka interested.

"Yes. After several attempts on gaining access to the Neo-REVOCS security systems, I've programmed a trojan which is 100% capable of getting into the systems of the corporation. By that, we will be able to disable the security measures of the main manufacture of Nagoya which is our next target. If we can get access to the manufacture, we will also be able to find out more about the Life Fibers plans. Iori."

"As Inumuta said. I've took a look at the structure of the clothes Neo-REVOCS produces and I noticed that they seemingly have the ability to... manipulate the thoughts and the body of the wearer, meaning they have a low capability of performing mind control. The clothes cannot precisely choose an action for the wearer, however, they are able to influence their next decision to an extend. I'm still investigating this phenomenon, I assume however it has something to do with the human brain and the nerve system, granted I'm not a doctor and so my knowledge about this is rather limited."

"And by getting access to the main manufacture we could get a good look on how they produce the clothes, and more importantly, we can find out where they get their materials, respectively, the Life Fibers from. A manufacture like this would be a waste if it wouldn't produce Life Fibers clothes. And of course we will also hurt Neo-REVOCS massively with an attack. This is why the trojan I programmed has to get access to the Neo-REVOCS security systems. It is essential for our operation."

"Do you have a plan on how to approach inserting the trojan into their systems already?" Mikisugi continues.

"The trojan is on a little stick. After inserting the stick on a server or computer dedicated to watch over the security systems, I could gain access from the base. The problem: This has to happen by sending someone directly into the Neo-REVOCS HQ. Said person has to upload the trojan in the server room."

"This could be difficult. The headquarter is surrounded by walls, towers, several quarters for employees, cameras are everywhere, soldiers probably guard the halls and if Neo-REVOCS didn't changed it, then there are clearance levels for employees as well. A normal employee is not allowed to visit the presidential office. Clearance only counts for the secretary, the head of security, Couturiers and the director." Satsuki mentions.

"Correct. Which is why we need two people - one of them will infiltrate the base, the second one will grant a Plan B should something go wrong." Houka answers.

"And who do you think would fit as an infiltrator who could sneak into a heavily armed fortress?" Satsuki asks curious. The door opens, Nui, Tsumugu and Hoomaru enter the room. Ryuko, Satsuki, Mikisugi, Iori and Houka look at them.

"Harime." Houka answers. Mikisugi raises his eyebrows, Ryuko shakes her head in disbelief.

"That's me!" she grins.

"Inumuta, we should talk about this, Harime could..." Mikisugi tries to intervene.

"You do know a lot about REVOCS, correct, Harime? Would you be interested in spying the HQ out?" Houka asks interested.

"What, why?" she asks.

"You'd have to cause some trouble. That's what you are best at, right?"

"I love trouble."

"Good. You'd have to get to the server room inside the HQ and insert this stick into one of the computers there." Houka explains shows her the stick. Nui looks perplexed, Ryuko laughs as a reaction.

"Server room!?"

"Correct."

"Never! The server room is in the presidential office, I'm not going to do that, nerd!" Nui answers stubborn and insulted.

...

The door to the presidential office opens, and Masaru enters it. Ichiro looks up and see's Masaru with nothing more than Ashigaru trousers on his legs, which are pretty devastated already. Masaru managed to get to Neo-REVOCS only today. As Ichiro notices that, he looks unimpressed. Masaru clears his throat.

"The... uh... Goku-Uniform... is..."

"... the Goku-Uniform isn't doing so well, yes?" Ichiro asks sarcastic. Masaru nods. Ichiro starts laughing slightly.

"I mean, you did made a good show. "Let us dream," I mean, Masaru, really, this is the most vile thing you said so far." he chuckles and stands up.

"Well... at least the base is destroyed. As for me... I only got here today because the transporter I drove didn't had enough fuel to drive back, so uh... I'm awake for more than 24 hours already."

"Aha. Get yourself a new uniform. In the end, you did a okay-ish job and that's all I was asking for more or less." Ichiro answers.

"I will."

"Your friends from COVERS have been sent to the Fiber Factories. They are surprisingly useful."

"I'm glad to hear that. I have to ask you it again - what exactly happens there? I never were there myself. I know, this might be annoying but these Fiber Factories have to be essential."

"They produce goods for the Honnouji Academy, that's all. There's nothing too interesting to see." Ichiro smiles.

"We also have one of these factories in the lower floors. Would you mind if I take a look at them in my free time?"

"Not at all. You'll see it's not as interesting as you believe." Ichiro answers. Masaru nods and leaves the room, getting a new uniform. After closing the door, Ichiro walks to the shelf and grabs a book about fishes and how to cook them.

"And now to you..." he mumbles curious.

...

Around noon...

"I can't believe you guys want ME to spy on Neo-REVOCS! Satsuki, have I done anything to you?! Seriously, this time I haven't killed your

dad if that is your problem!" Nui grins. Satsuki doesn't react. She and Nui drive in a fast car, and they are already in the inner city of Tokyo. Cars and people are everywhere.

"Give me an answer." Nui orders. Satsuki doesn't react again.

"Hello-hoo!" Nui says. Still no answer. Nui pouts and closes her arms, leaning back on her seat, then looking outside.

"Harime..." Satsuki suddenly says after five minutes.

"Hm?"

"... how well can Life Fibers manipulate human bodies?" Satsuki asks while concentrating on the street. The HQ isn't far away anymore.

"Why are you asking?"

"I'm figuring out why Ryuko feels so bad." Satsuki answers. Nui hesitates first.

"Mhm... there are many ways to control and manipulate the host. They could play in your head and mind stitch it."

"I know."

"They could also infuse Life Fibers to paralyze limbs."

"Well aware of that."

"Ooooooor they can hurt you over time. Like an actual parasite." Nui smiles.

"Figured. But how?"

"You'd need a few Life Fibers that come from the primordial Life Fiber itself. Normal Life Fibers simply need your blood, but those from the primordial Life Fiber, they can actually kill you." Nui

explains. You essentially sew a suit, a dress or whatever you like, stitch those Life Fibers on it and then continue as usual. I have those Life Fibers, but if I would remove them, I would die." Nui explains.

"I see. Is it possible to gain these Life Fibers on other ways as well?"

"The... High Entity has these Life Fibers as well, but you won't get them. Neither did I, nor mama."

"Why do you call Ragyo mama?"

"Because she is my mama."

"I recall your relationship was like a mentor and a student."

"Ah, you silly." Nui smiles.

"Why am I silly?"

"Because she called me her child!"

"..."

"And that means she is my mama. I miss mama. Everything would be better with mama." Nui answers. Satsuki dislikes the thought.

"Did you knew she died briefly after you died?"

"Nope. But now she is one single Life Fiber that flows around in the depths of the High Entity, and our memories." Nui answers smiling. Satsuki swallows.

"... what a disgusting thought."

"I think it's wonderful... if it wouldn't be for the High Entity."

"It really had to make you suffer to hate it and the Life Fibers so much."

"Well how would you feel if your entire purpose is rendered pointless and then you are thrown away like trash?" Nui asks curious.

"To be honest... I know the feeling. I've took over REVOCS briefly after you were gone, and now I am the one that has to deal with the hate that is directed at my mother. I'm listening for years to insults, and that I am a terrible woman." Satsuki reacts to that. Nui chuckles.

"Oh, come on, dear Satsuki, you are not a terrible woman. You are a stupid cow, but definitely not terrible!" Nui laughs.

"How kind of you."

"I just like to be kind. Haha, and everyone thinks I'm evil and hate everyone, I just hate humans in general!" Nui continues.

"Of course."

"Besides, everyone thinks I would betray you guys at some point, but really, am I that mean?! Sure, I kill a lot of people, but they do deserve it, and to be honest, I'm not into betraying." Nui smiles.

"If you say so. Well, you sound like you hate the Life Fibers indeed. We've arrived." Satsuki reacts and stops the car.

Both women stand two streets away from the Neo-REVOCS HQ. Transporters cross the streets, workers and employees of other companies walk around, smoke rises up here and there, machines are audible. From here, the complex of the Neo-REVOCS HQ looks like a giant fortress that even has a dome around the main building - the tower. Satsuki and Nui look out of the window.

"Again: Reach the presidential layer, find the server room, upload the trojan, then escape and come back here. If Neo-REVOCS starts the alarm, I will try to get to the underground car park. If they spot you, get down there as fast as you can. I'll make an exit ready." Satsuki reminds Nui.

"Yes, mama." Nui grins.

"Good. With your disguise, you shouldn't have too many problems. They probably will notice it however if you enter the server room." Satsuki thinks. Nui leaves the car and opens the trunk, grabbing some sort of clothing.

"Good luck." Satsuki wishes calm. Nui closes the trunk and slams her hand two times against the car door, then Satsuki drives away. The Grand Couturier then walks to a dark alley and puts her clothes on. Out of the alley, her Alter Ego Shinjiro Nagita appears, wearing a Neo-REVOCS uniform in red and white colors. Her left eye is covered by hair once more since the scar on it is still visible.

Briefly after, Nui makes her way to the Neo-REVOCS HQ. The dozens of meters high walls and the skyscrapers appear as impressive as always, and something is going on everywhere. She enters the complex by one of the many employee entrances next to the gates, and then she takes a look around. Nothing stayed the same which is rather shocking for her, as it was quiet and calm here a few weeks ago. Clean streets and buildings, organized employee worker groups, monorails that end in the warehouses... it would be a dream come true if it wouldn't be for the new director. As a first step, Nui leaves the main plaza and visits the tower which serves as the main building and actual HQ. Inside the dome, work halls are everywhere. Sewing machines can be heard, employees talking to each other, even overseers who give orders are here and there. Passing by many groups of workers and Ashigaru, she realizes how much of a fashion empire inside this fashion empire exists, and yet, she feels unsafe. After all, this was her home. Now it's just a hostile area. Arriving in the tower, she finds herself back in the reception and notices it got restaurated entirely. A clock is ticking.

There is a giant pillar in the middle of the large room, with huge monitors on it that display the faces of several high ranked Nudist Beach members. Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui are displayed as well. The screens shine in green. This room alone is so huge, an entire stitching hall could fit in it, with hundreds of employees. Nui looks up.

Elevators with glass walls are at the left and right side of the room and behind the reception, huge stairs lead up to the Auditorium and the first floor. The ceiling, or better, the ground of the highest floors are visible too if you look up.

"What did they do to my home..." she mumbles shocked and walks to the reception, where a serious looking woman watches Nui. Ashigaru gunners stand at the walls.

"Hello. Is the director available?" Nui asks careful.

"Access to the presidential layer is allowed only for armed employees, the Couturiers and the head of security. The director does not allow disturbances."

"And my clearance level goes as much as...?"

"You are allowed to visit the Couturier's layer."

"Thank you." Nui answers and visits an elevator. Inside, she finds a map of the Neo-REVOCS main building. It's 370 meters high, with 60 floors. The first floor contains the Auditorium, followed up by that, several stitching halls and worker quarters as well as warehalls and Fiber Factories, then offices and in the upper floors barracks for soldiers and preparation rooms. The 58. floor is reserved for the Couturiers, the 59. floor for the so called experimental layer and the 60. floor is the presidential layer Nui has to get to. The server room is behind the office of Masaru and above Ichiro's, which means, if everything works fine, they won't even notice she is in the building. There is also a living room for the former Grand Couturier and a dining hall. It's pretty much a palace up there. Nui presses the button and goes to the Couturier's layer. Until she arrives, it might take two or three minutes.

In the meantime, Masaru visits the Fiber Factories in the lower floors with interest. These halls are pretty dark and quiet, the walls here are black and capsules in human size are everywhere. COVERS have been stored here probably. Via small windows, Masaru can see

Life Fibers crawling inside the capsules. Via a podest, he can also watch some of his COVERS members working, they clean up the room at the moment. Other than that, it actually is rather uninteresting here. Steam rises up from the capsules sometimes.

"I suppose this is how Life Fibers are produced here. Interesting. Has to do something with the materials we get each day." he thinks and walks back to the elevator. As the door opens, he enters it and see's Nui, but can't recognize her obviously as she appears like Shinjiro Nagita.

"Haven't seen you here yet." Masaru notices interested and takes a look at Nui. Nui grins.

"I've been moved to the HQ recently." she answers and looks out of the window walls.

"I see. Here at the headquarter, a lot of people come and go, but I know every one of them by name. I need your identity card." Masaru orders and looks at Nui with a serious face. Nui thinks.

"Uh, you see, I don't have it with me today, I..."

"... and your name?"

"Shin... Shinjiro Nagita." she hesitates to answer.

"You seem worries."

"It's my first day here."

"Oh of course, apologies. What does an employee want in the upper floors? I've seen you want to visit the Couturier's layer."

"One of the Couturier's gave me a task, I have to get their stuff to them."

"Interesting. Couturier's don't forget their tools usually, when they work."

"Well this one does."

"What's his number?" Masaru asks. The door to the Couturier's layer opens. Nui walks into the hall.

"Oh would you look at that, I arrived, hehe, I have to go now." Nui grins.

"You are not going anywhere. I need to know that everything is working properly. Now stand still." he orders and opens the elevator door, approaching Nui.

"Of course you do." Nui answers and looks around. The white hall they are in is quiet and empty. No cameras, no guards, just a hall and a small store room.

"The number." he orders in distrust.

"Alright, alright, you got me, take this." she grins and pulls out her Standard Fiber Rifle, smashing the grip against Masaru and thus knocking him unconscious. Nui opens the door to the store room quickly and pulls him into the room, then she closes the room and puts her weapon away.

"Now you gotta be quick, love." she mumbles to herself.

Walking through the Couturier's halls, she can only hear her footsteps. It's dead quiet here. As she opens the door to the next room, she finds dozens of small closed rooms with window walls, however, you cannot take a look inside. They are only transparent from inside, which means only people in the room can see what is going on in the halls, and therefore, she can't take a look at the Couturiers. However, sewing machines can be heard quietly. Via the hall she visits the stairwell and walks it up, arriving in the experimental layer. As employee, she is not allowed to be here. Carefully opening the door to the experimental layer, she notices Ashigaru patrolling the halls, and cameras are visible. Nui considers her options.

"I could maybe get one of these armors..." she believes and kicks the door open. Two Ashigaru notice that and approach the door, entering the stairwell, and then experiencing the power of the Standard Fiber Rifle from close range. With two quick attacks, she can kill both Ashigaru and moves them into a corner without being spotted. To her surprise, the armor itself cannot be removed, it seems like it is part of the Ashigaru's body which makes it difficult. The helmet however can be took off. Nui shrugs and grabs it, putting it on her head.

"I look stupid." she mumbles and shakes her head, then grabbing a Katana as well. Now she looks like an employee with an Ashigaru's helmet and an Katana. Administrators and researchers are everywhere, with the researchers wearing red coats. Not white ones, this is Neo-REVOCS after all. They seem confused, but they also don't seem like raising the alarm. For them, it just looks like an Ashigaru without armor, after all, no one knows the Ashigaru are robotic, unlike the Samurai. Nui continues to be careful though as she isn't the only "armed guard" in the floor, since she notices more Ashigaru walking around. Carefully, she walks through the rooms of the experimental layer - people work here on new clothes or perform other minor experiments with Life Fibers. Case in point, Nui see's a man who's currently working on a blueprint for a shirt that doesn't cover the torso and belly of the wearer.

"Why would anyone wear this trash?" she wonders quietly and continues.

Masaru wakes up and looks around. He is disorientated and leaves the store room.

"Shinjiro Nagita, huh?" he mumbles and quickly goes back to the elevator.

Satsuki in the meantime waits on the roof of a parking lot near the Neo-REVOCS complex. Via radio, she talks with Houka.

"So what's this little present you had in mind, Houka?" Satsuki asks curious.

"Oh, nothing special, just a little something for the new director of Neo-REVOCS which I believe to be enjoyable to look at."

"That would be?"

"If I would told you that, you wouldn't find it funny anymore. You'd have to see it for yourself. If you can't see it later, I'll show you when you are back." Houka chuckles and hears Nonon in the background.

"Houka!"

"And there's Nonon."

"Don't let her wait, my friend." Satsuki answers.

"I won't. Let me know when you are gone."

"I will."

Masaru opens the door to the presidential office. Ichiro sits on his chair at the desk and writes down a few notes right now from the cooking book on his left.

"... a small scoop of salt..." he mumbles to himself.

"Director!" Masaru yells.

"Since when do you call me director?" Ichiro asks curious and notices the blood wound on Masarus head.

"We have an intruder in the Couturier's layer!"

"So? Kill him." he answers unimpressed and continues to work.

"His name is Shinjiro Nagita. You've talked about him once." Masaru reacts annoyed. And by that, the pencil falls out of Ichiro's hand. He

looks up at Masaru silently. Masaru notices he definitely knows what this means.

"Raise the silent alarm for the Ashigaru and Samurai. Nui is here." he orders and stands up.

Nui reaches the end of the experimental layer. Samurai guard the exit that leads to the presidential office's stairwell.

"Lovely..." she mumbles and walks back into one of the laboratories. She finds a few chemicals there, and Life Fibers. Quickly thinking about her next move, she grabs a few of the chemicals without being noticed. One of them seem to be phosphore. Combining it with Life Fibers can cause a small explosion and a light fire. Sneaking past the people and grabbing more materials, she walks to a wall. In a brief moment, she combines the chemicals with the Life Fibers she found, with the Life Fibers consuming the phosphore. Her hand starts heating up. Going back to the exit, she throws the small bomb into another laboratory without anyone noticing it. Briefly after, the small bomb explodes and a few glasses fly apart, as well as two desks. A small fire starts, and the sprinkler system goes on. It's nothing too concerning. Nui uses the distraction to pass by the Samurai who left the exit unguarded, and then she opens the door while the researchers fight the fire.

The hall she enters is cold and quiet, and feels abandoned - although it rather feels like no one ever visits it. The hall itself is clean. At the end of the hall, stairs on the right side lead up to the presidential office and the backdoor that leads to Masarus office. Nui can hear the footsteps above her. That must be either Masaru or Ichiro walking around. Carefully sneaking around, she opens the door to the server room. It's cold there, but that was to expect. Nui's steps are well audible here, and so, she walks as slow and careful as she can to not get spotted by possible guards in the room. Samurai won't guard here, but Ashigaru are resistant to the cold, and since there is some kind of fog due to the cold temperature, she can't see much. Red lights enlighten the room. Luckily, the cold degrees here don't harm Nui as Nui herself is ice cold already. The

computers are at the end of the room in small lockers, alongside huge monitors on the walls that give a good overview over another certain part of the building which seems to be covert. There is a huge reactor on the monitors, red lights flash out of it. It must produce a ton of energy. Maybe it serves as an energy source for the facility? In any case, Nui quickly opens one of the lockers and pulls out the Stick with the trojan which she then connects with a port on the computer. A small window appears on the monitor, telling Nui that the data is being uploaded.

"Nice... and now I gotta get out of here." Nui mumbles to herself and leaves the server room quietly again.

In the command center of the Nudist Beach HQ, Houka and Nonon talk a bit, while Mikisugi and Tsumugu seem to play chess.

"Now I got you." Mikisugi grins while Tsumugu acts calm and chill. Mikisugi moves the knight.

"You don't." he grins and moves his rook. The monitors go on. All four of them look at them.

"The trojan has been uploaded. Perfect." Houka grins mischievous and gets to his laptop immediately. Nonon watches him work, but she doesn't understand a single word, and so do Mikisugi and Tsumugu.

Nui arrives in the experimental layer again. The people here still fight with the fire, but more Ashigaru walk around now, and they seem to search for Nui. Carefully walking through the laboratories, suddenly, the speakers in the HQ turn on. The employees stop except for those who fight the fire and listen to them.

"Nui, I didn't knew you would want to visit us. How about a round of Hide and seek? The silent alarm for the Neo-REVOCS complex is raised to an case of emergency. Nui Harime has been spotted in the complex and is disguised as a young man called Shinjiro Nagita. Close the gates and guard them, no one is allowed to leave the

facility until the alarm has been revoked." Ichiro orders. Nui's pupils increase. Following up, she walks stressed to the elevator. Her time is running out. The elevator goes down.

Satsuki noticed the alarm as more Ashigaru patrol the complex now, and she also heard Ichiro talking about Nui via the speakers. Quickly climbing on the rooftop of a nearby building, she climbs on top of the wall of the complex and sneaks into a watch tower where she see's Ashigaru patrolling the area.

"Would have been too easy..." she mumbles and starts to think on how to approach the underground parking lot.

Arriving back in the reception and entrance hall of the building, Nui marks how about ten Samurai stand in front of the entrance, observing the area carefully. Nui left her Ashigaru helmet and the Katana in the elevator since it would make the people here more suspicious, especially with the alarm raised now. Looking around for a second exit, she visits the Auditorium by walking up the stairs behind the pillar in the hall.

"There's an exit under the Auditorium that leads to the parking lot... almost there..." she mumbles slightly worried. Inside the Auditorium, an Neo-REVOCS administrator is holding a speech on the podest currently. Men and women that seem to be his employees listen to him attentive. As she carefully walks through the dozens of employees, steps are audible on the podest. The administrator stops his speech and turns around.

"Nui!" Ichiro yells. Nui stands still.

"I know you are here. I can sense you after all!" he smiles and looks around.

"Director!" a few of the employees react surprised. Nui keeps her head down and slowly continues walking. Passing by the men and women who watch Ichiro looking around, he is unable to see Nui yet, as Nui is too far away from the podest to be visible in the large group

of people. The only way to get to the underground parking lot is by climbing up the podest of the Auditorium and hide there until Satsuki arrives.

"Alright. On the ground, everyone." Ichiro suddenly orders. Slowly but steady, the audience sits down, and Nui does the same to not get spotted. She looks on the ground like most people around here. Ichiro jumps down into the audience and looks around.

"Satsuki, where are you...?" Nui whispers to herself worried. Ichiro's steps are well audible and clear. Looking up carefully, Ichiro is still a few meters away.

"Look at me." Ichiro orders one of the men.

"You're not Nui..."

"You."

"No..."

...

"Nui, this game of Hide and seek is fun and games and all, but we both know I'm better at this." he says pretentious, yet calm. Nui carefully holds one of her hands inside her pockets and pulls out a clone with which she looks back to Ichiro then.

"Don't disappoint me, girl..." she thinks and breathes in and out, then watching Ichiro coming closer.

"Look at me."

"You're not Nui either..." he mumbles. Ichiro faces Nui with his back. It seems as if he can only sense Nui up to an extent, only capable of being aware she is with him in the same room, but not able to actually tell where exactly she is. Nui rolls her clone carefully to her right towards Ichiro. Ichiro chuckles.

"Found you!" he laughs and turns around, kicking the clone away. Nui jumps up and starts running. Ichiro walks towards Nui patiently, but resolve, while Nui climbs up the podest, ramming away the administrator that tries to catch her. Just as she tries to approach the exit of the podest and Auditorium, Life Fiber threads appear in the air and block the way.

"You'd think I let you run away?" he asks curious and climbs up onto the podest as well. Nui quickly grabs her weapon and shoots at Ichiro who however dodges easily.

"Missed that." he grins and grabs Nui's weapon, throwing it away. As he grabs Nui, Nui punches him in the guts. The attack doesn't help however, and so, Ichiro grabs Nui and throws her off the podest. She tries to reach her rifle and shoots once more at Ichiro, but again, he dodges. The people inside the room are panicked by the encounter and run away.

"OH COME ON DIE ALREADY!" Nui screams angry. Ichiro laughs and shakes his head, as another bullet flies next to him.

"Too bad you've always been better in melee combat." he taunts. Nui stands up and tries to get out of the Auditorium via the normal entrance the visitors used, but here, the same problem appears as well, with Life Fiber threads blocking the door. Nui tries to cut them with her rifle blade, but the threads regenerate quickly.

"Grrr!" and suddenly, her hair is grabbed. Ichiro throws Nui against a wall.

"There's no sense in running away." Ichiro says and watches how Nui's head slams against the wall. Blood appears, Nui's disguise dissolves, and the actual Nui is visible again. She coughs blood and feels dizzy due to the hit and tries to stand up, until Ichiro drags Nui to himself with Life Fibers, causing her to fly to him. While in the air, Ichiro forms a fist and rams it into Nui's face. Her nose breaks. If she would have bones, you would hear them crack now. Ichiro grabs her Standard Fiber Rifle and rams it into her back as she lies on the

ground. Nui desperately tries to flee. Pulling out the weapon out of her back again and throwing it away, Ichiro grabs her up.

"Afraid of dying?" he asks curious. The director then slams Nui at a wall and starts stroking her neck. Nui bites her teeth together and tries to get off of Ichiro, but nothing helps. Blood leaves her neck.

"No... Sa... ts..."

"That really has to hurt, doesn't it?"

"... He..."

"Do you want to live?! You want to live!? Tell me you want to live! Hahaha!"

"... ye..."

"Is that a yes?"

"Ye... s..."

"Great!" Ichiro smiles and lets off of Nui. Nui falls onto the ground and coughs, reaches for air, her panic and anxiety is well visible.

"Now stand up." he orders. Nui doesn't react.

"STAND UP, HARIME!" he screams. Nui tries to stand up.

"Now don't move." the director pleads and points his finger at Nui's face. Then he forms a fist and slams it right into Nui's face with such a power that she is knocked unconscious. Her head slams against the wall, and blood leaves it once more, causing a mess on the wall. Everything turns dark for her. Ichiro lifts up Nui and holds her with both arms.

"That was truly mean of me... but you love that. I got an idea..." he whispers into her ear and walks back to the presidential office...

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A light appears. It's far away. A few single Life Fibers move through an absolutely dark and empty room. It's dead quiet. Some of these Life Fibers form a body in a red-orange mixture. First the torso, then slowly the legs, the arms, and eventually, the head. The arms do not have actual hands, it's more like single fibers that can reach out of them. The legs don't have completed feet, it looks like the toes are gone entirely. This being reminds of a human form, but it is everything but a human. And as it awakens and stands up, a horrible, yet emotionless grimace is visible. Deeply orange and red "eyes" with white glimmering. It doesn't have a mouth like a human, it's rather many Life Fibers that are wrapped around it. In addition to that, a nose or ears are not on the head either, but there is something like hair that slowly materializes on the head and forms two pigtails on the left and right side which go down up to the hips. A heart is well visible on the upper body beneath the breast area - and it seems like the heart is broken. It shines red, yet there is a black scar all over it, almost like splitting it into two parts. This is Nui Harime.

The actual Nui Harime.

She looks around. As she see's the light on the other side of the indescribable gigantic room, she kneels down, probably in fear, or disappointment. An echo slowly approaches her quietly. Dark Life Fibers fly through the room slowly. They seem to sing in a language humans cannot understand - quick, yet calm, beautiful, but menacing.

"Failure."

"Worthless."

"Family."

"Death."

"Lady Ragyo."

"Sisters."

"Hate."

"Love."

"Hate."

"Love."

"Hate."

"Love."

Words that the Life Fibers sing slowly. Nui stands up and walks with wistful steps, but as the echo arrives, a death scream reveals, sounding like Nui herself, and so, she is thrown back to the corner she was at the start. Nui shakes her head and tries it again, but after five more minutes, she is thrown back again. And so, she starts whimpering quietly. She feels hungry and sleepy.

Suddenly, the light moves to her and drags Nui into it. Everything turns white, and then, Nui's body dissolves again...

In the meantime, Satsuki sneaks through the complex, passing by guards and taking them out one by one without getting spotted. The Ashigaru and Samurai are still on alert, it seems, as there are increased patrols. Entering the underground parking lot, she can hear two men talking about Nui, and that she apparently got sent into the presidential office.

"Damn... Houka?" Satsuki whispers into her radio.

"Yes, Satsuki?"

"I'm in the underground parking lot at the moment, Neo-REVOCS raised the alarm and got Nui."

"I see."

"I'll make my way up to the presidential office and see if I can get her out."

"Are you sure you want to get up there? Do you have a disguise or anything?"

"No. But I trust Nui."

"How so?"

"She's a liar, but she's not a betrayer." Satsuki mentions and walks out of her cover, facing a dozen of Samurai that watch over a group of Ashigaru loading up transporters with Life Fibers.

"That's Kiryuin!" a Samurai reacts surprised. Satsuki draws her Katana.

"Surrender, Kiryuin, otherwise you will experience pain, too insufferable for human beings!"

"Pigs that fawn over clothing..." she mumbles to herself and gets ready for a fight. She knows she will not win, but the Samurai will not kill her, that is certain...

...

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...

Nui awakes with headaches. As she wakes up and looks around, everything feels so trustworthy and warm here. Purple walls,

expensive and noble furniture, a soft and comfortable bed, a portrait of her with Lady Ragyo... and then the door opens. It's Ichiro. Nui reacts scared and leans back.

"Only five minutes and you are back already?" he grins and opens the cupboard. Nui doesn't react.

"You might want some new clothes first." the director mentions and grabs Nui's dress. It's bloody and looks rather damaged already. Suddenly, he precisely cuts the dress apart into many pieces and then throws it into a bin.

"W-w..." she mumbles and then notices that she is completely naked. Ichiro grabs some new clothes out of the cupboard - a purple vest with yellow trousers, and a belt. He puts the clothes onto a desk next to the cupboard.

"You should wear something first." Ichiro suggests. Nui doesn't dare to stand up.

"Now come on, I am you, don't be ashamed, I know how you look like, and besides... I wouldn't want you to walk around like this." Nui's Doppelgänger reacts and looks away.

"Go on. I'm not a pervert, unlike you."

Following up, Nui stands up.

"You know, Nui... I always wanted to see you as a proper human. You look magnificent. Cute, but deadly. At least on the portrait. Now you just look like any ordinary rebel, with a boring hair cut and a scar that reveals your origin and true self." he thinks loudly.

"... I need a shirt..." she mumbles scared. Ichiro nods.

"Of course you do, my bad." he chuckles and walks to the cupboard once more, grabbing a red shirt, and then he puts it onto the desk. Nui grabs the shirt as he looks away. After that, she puts on the shirt

and the vest, however, the vest doesn't seem to fit yet, it might need a few adjustments. Ichiro notices that.

"Let me help you." he smiles and walks to her back, pulling the vest tighter. The director leads Nui to a huge mirror. One could say she is an entirely different person now. Without a dress, she looks like a fighter, and as Ichiro said, like a rebel. At the very least it's well visible now she is a troublemaker. With an excited face expression, Ichiro looks in the mirror.

"What do you think?" he asks curious. Nui doesn't answer.

"Not very talkative, hm? Follow me. I want to talk." he orders suddenly and enters the presidential office. Nui looks around. This is her old quarter, built exactly like before, as if it was never gone. She hesitates first but then starts to follow Ichiro into the office. He sits down onto his chair and leans his arms behind his head, waiting for Nui to sit down as well. Her weapon lies on a desk at the wall, unreachable for her. Both stare at each other's eyes. Nui's devil's masks in her eyes stopped laughing. They seem emotionless.

"Nui, I'm in a bad spot. The High Entity said I should kill you. Can you believe that?!"

"..."

"I think it's cruel, don't you think? I mean... you are forced to pretty much kill yourself. Well, not entirely, but my point comes across, doesn't it?" he thinks loudly. Nui doesn't react. What should she say anyway?

"Humanity honestly annoys me. I'm surprised you can keep up with them the entire time and tolerate them. So many idiots, so many individuals that step through this world without a clear mind, but full of stupidity and hate. All with emotions. Some laugh, some cry, some love, some hate... and then there's you."

"..."

"Raised by the hybrid your mother was, not as an true Life Fiber, but as an abomination, as I like to call it. Sure... 100% Life Fibers, originally part of the High Entity... but raised by a human and thus, being able to feel and empathize. Cynical said, you are a Life Fiber that acts like a human." Ichiro mentions and looks into Nui's face.

"It has to feel really bad to be alone."

"... I'm not alone."

"No, you are with the vermin you sworn to purge. Perverted weaklings. Tell me, what do you hope to gain by all of this? Your great battle against the "evil" Ichiro Harime, your fight against the Life Fibers and the fate of two species... as this is all about it."

"... I don't care about anyone. Humans. Life Fibers. Both are worthless."

"And yet you are not on my side."

"... how can you be on the side of someone who throws you away like trash, tortures you for five entire years, trying to make you descend into madness?" Nui asks insulted. Ichiro grins.

"Well isn't that what you want? Isn't that what you always do yourself?"

"..."

"Isn't that the kind of love and attention you always want and believe to get? That you have to hurt someone, or even kill them, all to believe an illusion, that people would love you? Haven't we Life Fibers done everything correct for you? Haven't I done everything correct? After all, the High Entity and I both chose to send you into the absolute emptiness. Unlimited love." Ichiro asks curious and stands up, walking to Nui, while she shakes her head in disbelief.

"Let me ask you one question, Nui." he pleads and kneels down next to Nui, looking up to her face.

"Are love and hate truly two sides of the same coin?"

"..."

"Whenever a human asks you this, you just grin and call them stupid. But now that I am asking this, you look so... offended."

"... what do you know?"

"I know everything about you. After all, I am you, just better. That is why I ask you this. You're living in a paradoxon, an illusion, it's nothing more than a cheap mindset for a psychopathic personality that encourages it to be even more cruel... and honestly, I don't mind that, really, be as evil as you want, but I would be a liar if I'd say it hurts me to see you think like this. This is just stupid."

"..."

"The more you hurt someone, the more they want to hurt you. Look at the poor little Ryuko. What did she do to you to hurt her so much? You kill her dad, you cause her sister to get into trouble several times, you want to start a genocide with your "mother..." and you really think they would forgive you? Or that they even like you? You laughed into her face when you told her you killed this old worthless idiot her father was."

"... forgiveness..."

"Nui, I totally understand your anxiety issues and fear, that's what makes it so funny. It's just hilarious to see how inexperienced you are when it comes to social interactions. Well, to an extent it's of course not your fault, you are psychopathic, just like uh, me, I suppose, although I don't have to laugh into my opponents face every time I make something great. I believe everything and everyone is a tool. You do not. I sometimes ask myself what is wrong

with you. It's... it's as if you weren't the best of us... it's as if you would have been nothing but the greatest failure." he grins. Nui doesn't answer again. She sniffs.

"No one loves you. Why even care?" he asks and puts Life Fibers on the table, then sits down again.

"I'll tell you why. I know you hate me. I really was evil to you. But it was too much fun to see you whimper, to see you starve, longing for sleep, and yet you cannot, because this is the absolute emptiness we are talking about. You always wished you could die a second time to truly get rid of all of this and leave this universe entirely, yet you cannot, as you've already been dead. What a cruel fate, if you ask me. Walking around five years in an empty room. On the other hand, it's not me, so... it's just too bad you couldn't cry. We Life Fibers can't cry."

"I can't cry either..."

"Then why do you whimper?" he asks.

"I..."

"..."

"... I just can."

"Because deep inside the Life Fiber skin, there is a human heart pulsating. I don't have one."

"..."

"Oh well, I'm doing it again, hm? Apologies. Now then, hear me out. As "enforcer" of the High Entity and the Chosen I have every right to kill you and I will do that. Unless... unless you do exactly as I say. Imagine you could go back home again. You could live a normal "live" again, maybe become part of the High Entity, or... oh my..." he thinks. His eyes shimmer happy.

"... imagine you could become a mother? My Doppelgänger, my inferior "me," it would become a "primordial Life Fiber", raise up to one of our best and strongest beings and produce more Life Fibers. Imagine all the love you would get from your children. Millions of Life Fibers that will always love and care for you and give you the warmth you are longing for. Honestly... it sometimes angers me that I am a male Life Fiber. I would be envious. And all you'd have to do is to do exactly as I say." he proposes interested. Nui looks up. Her eyes shine.

"And you know what's the best thing about it?" he asks smiling. Nui shakes her head but she is excited to hear him out all of a sudden.

"You'd know if I lie. Do I lie?" he asks smiling. Nui hesitates.

"You don't..." she reacts surprised.

"Ahh... would you look at that. You like that thought, do you? I can see it in your eyes. They look so genuinely happy all of a sudden. They are telling me the truth. You love the thought." he smiles happy.

"... would I see mama again?"

"Of course you would. She's living as a single Life Fiber. It would make her proud to see you. You and Ragyo. Like mother and daughter. Imagine how proud she would be to see you become a mother yourself. A primordial Life Fiber that gives birth to millions of new Life Fibers." Ichiro imagines. Nui smiles.

"Everything would be better again. Once the Hive Mind finds out how well you did despite your mistakes and the undefeatable fact you are inferior to me... I like this thought. You'll always be inferior, yet beloved again."

"... this... I... I like this thought." she smiles happy. Masaru opens the door and enters the room.

"Director!" Masaru says proud. Ichiro and Nui look at him.

"Grand Couturier." he smiles to Nui.

"What do you want?" Ichiro asks.

"Look who we found." Masaru grins. A group of Samurai enter the office and throw Satsuki into it. A few Ashigaru wait in Masarus office. One of the Samurai wears a damaged armor and Satsuki's Katana and approaches Masaru.

"This weirdo wanted to kill me!" the Samurai rants. Ichiro grins and stands up, walking to Satsuki.

"You've brought Satsuki with you too, Nui?" he asks curious. Satsuki looks at Ichiro unimpressed. She didn't got any hits, looks like she surrendered.

"I did." Nui smiles and stands up, looking at Satsuki.

"What's all about this, Harime?" Satsuki asks.

"Which one?" Ichiro grins and pets Nui's hair.

"I see..." as Satsuki realizes what's going apparently.

"Well, look at it this way, Satsuki, she does like you, but she seems to like the thought of being back with her Life Fibers more, isn't that so, Nui?" Ichiro asks. Nui grins and nods happily.

"Grab your weapon, Nui." he orders and then speaks to Satsuki.

"Now, Satsuki, what made you think to visit my office just like that? What exactly was your plan behind all of this?" he asks curious and holds Satsuki's head up.

"Does it matter?" she asks.

"Not at all to be honest. Dismissed, men. Satsuki, your visit can be used as a great way of initiating Nui back into the circle of Life Fibers again. She might be not as great as me, but still useful. Like an

excellent tool you care about. You know a lot about tools, do you? Your friends been tools, your students, even your sister was a tool, really, that is not really nice if you ask me. And I gotta know it, I'm not biased unlike my Doppelgänger." he grins and sits back onto his chair. Two Samurai stand in the room and guard it, with one of them being the one who holds Satsuki's Katana.

"But tools for the righteous cause. I've dealt with it because this life was over. I wanted to let go of my mother and her cruel deeds." Satsuki answers calm.

"Then I have to be a real party crasher. Such a stupid way of losing your new earned life by a simple parasite that feasts inside your head. What is it that bothers you? The fact you cannot develop a cure? That your dear sister Ryuko doesn't feel too good all of a sudden?" he asks curious while Nui comes back with her weapon.

"How do you know about Ryuko's state!?"

"Nui, I want you to torture Satsuki and find out how long she can endure until she surrenders." Ichiro orders ice cold.

"Answer my question!" Satsuki orders angry. Nui stands in front of Satsuki and looks into her eyes. Nui winks with her left eye that has the scar. Satsuki nods slightly.

"And you, Harime? Is that really what you want? He will betray you once you're useless to him. If this is what you want, look me in the eyes and tell me you want to hurt and kill me!" Satsuki reacts - pretending to be angry.

"Oh Satsuki, you really are silly and cute." Nui chuckles and unlocks the weapon, reloading it quickly.

(AN: I suggest you listen to the track "Suck Your Blood" from Kill La Kill by searching it up on YouTube. You can listen to it while reading! ^^)

"This will be a mess. I hate it. Nui, make it quick, please." Ichiro pleads and waits patiently. Nui then shows Satsuki her tongue and turns her weapon towards Ichiro!

"EVERYTHING FOR YOU, LOVE!" she screams and suddenly fires at Ichiro, blowing his head off! Ichiro falls dead from the chair!

Satsuki stands up and turns to the Samurai that holds her Katana, then jumping at him and grabbing it. Nui fires at the second Samurai who quickly draws his weapon after grabbing the Life Fibers on Ichiro's now blood soaked desk. By fueling the REVOCS Standard Fiber Rifle with new, fresh Life Fibers, it's firepower increases and lights up. Therefore, the Samurai's armor is penetrated, and so, he falls onto the ground badly hurt, unable to fight, as Nui shot him in the leg. The door opens, Masaru appears.

"Director, is everything al..." and all of a sudden, Masaru is kicked down by Satsuki and rolls the stairs down. Samurai run from his office into the presidential office.

"WOULD ANYONE KILL THESE GUYS ALREADY?!" Masaru screams angry and retreats. Nui and Satsuki take a few steps back and pass Ichiro's corpse which slowly regenerates again. Nui and Satsuki fight the incoming Samurai, however, more and more appear, until at least twelve of them are around the two women. Ichiro regenerates again and turns around, noticing his blood soaked body.

"This certainly was the most STUPID thing you could have done, Nui!" he grins.

"Va te faire foutre!" Nui reacts annoyed and shoots at Ichiro who dodges however. Satsuki and Nui are completely surrounded, no way out anymore, it seems.

"Excuse-toi!" Ichiro reacts smiling. Satsuki and Nui stand behind a window wall.

"So what now, Satsuki?" Nui asks while smiling at Ichiro and his goons. Satsuki slams the windows open with her Katana, and as a reaction to that, Ichiro quickly draws Life Fibers.

"Trust me, I've learned this from Ryuko!" she suddenly says and grabs Nui's arm just as Ichiro attacks. Nui and Satsuki jump out of the building. Ichiro and his goons look surprised as they see them fall down.

"They just jumped out!" a Samurai comments.

"How annoying." Ichiro reacts. The Samurai leave the building to try to catch them. Ashigaru start firing on Satsuki and Nui from the walls several hundreds of meter above them. Satsuki holds Nui with one arm while Nui looks around shocked. Ichiro liquifies into Life Fibers and chases them down.

"WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU, SATSUKI!?"

"I DON'T KNOW, I'VE LEARNED THIS FROM RYUKO!" Satsuki yells and throws her Katana towards another building. The grappling hook drags both of them towards the building. In the last moment, Satsuki pulls the hook back, and both start flying through the air again.

"AHHH! PARASOL! WHERE'S MY PARASOL!?" she screams and tries to pull out her parasol which she manages to do so. Satsuki throws her Katana against an advertisement monitor, destroys it and gets dragged to it, while Nui flies around in the air with her parasol in one hand, and her rifle in the other hand. Finally, Satsuki and Nui both arrive the plaza of Tokyo in mid air and fly down to it, with Satsuki landing against a statue and sliding onto it safely down, while Nui closes her parasol, performing a salto and then landing safely on the ground. And less than five seconds later, Neo-REVOCS Ashigaru notice Nui and Satsuki and start firing on them. Satsuki takes cover behind the statue, Nui shoots at the Ashigaru and takes a few steps back, hiding behind the statue as well. Bullets fly over them. The people on the plaza run away in fear. However, Nui is shot

in the torso due to a bullet penetrating their cover. Satsuki retreats. Nui pulls out a bullet and feeds the Life Fibers inside it with her blood that leaves her body, thus increasing the fire power of the bullet. Red smoke rises from the barrel, and then, Nui stands up with a fat smile on her face, aiming at the Ashigaru.

"Here's a present!" she laughs.

STANDARD FIBER RIFLE - DEVASTATOR AMMO

As she fires her rifle, an incredibly huge bullet leaves the barrel which even grows larger after the shot, until it explodes briefly before the Ashigaru, devastating absolutely everything around it in a 360° radius. Satsuki looks up impressed as every single Ashigaru got eliminated by that. Nui laughs.

"SO YOU MONKEYS REALLY THINK YOU COULD GET ME AND MY LOVELY SATSUKI!?" Nui laughs and reloads. Suddenly, an explosion behind both of them occurs. Nui and Satsuki turn around. Ichiro appears out of it, seems like he destroyed a few cars that stood in his way.

"Who do you call a monkey?" Ichiro asks curious. Nui looks surprised.

"We better go now, Satsuki." she whispers to her companion. Satsuki nods.

"Good call." Satsuki reacts. Both women retreat from Ichiro who slowly follows them with a slight smile. Transporters with Ashigaru arrive and start firing on both Nudist Beach members, yet Satsuki and Nui are able to take more cover and hijack a car. Satsuki jumps into the drivers seat and starts the engine, as it luckily was active due to the driver fleeing from the battle. Nui sits onto the passengers seat, then Satsuki starts driving. Suddenly, the car stops. Looking out, Satsuki and Nui notice how Ichiro holds the car with Life Fibers, slowly getting to them.

"What's wrong, you rebels?" he asks curious.

"Severe the threads!" Satsuki calls towards Nui. Nui climbs out of the car and attacks the threads with the rifle blade, cutting them off one by one. As Ichiro notices how he will not be able to reach them in time due to Nui cutting the threads off, he stops, and the Ashigaru stop shooting as well.

"Kiryuin! If you want to find out what's up with Senketsu, meet me tomorrow at this time in the Kiryuin manor!" Ichiro laughs. Satsuki and Nui look up at Ichiro in shock.

"What?!" Satsuki reacts perplexed. Did he just said Senketsu?

"See you tomorrow!" and then, Ichiro lets off. The car suddenly starts driving with an immense speed, so quick, Nui almost falls out of it. Neo-REVOCS doesn't even chase them down. Relieved, both women sit down and drive... and now it is clear for both of them that something is definitely wrong with Senketsu...

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As Ichiro returns to the Neo-REVOCS HQ a few minutes later, he looks around surprised as he see's his face on every single monitor of the facility. He's having a clown face and red, afro like hair on his head. Circus music runs in the background, and in the corner of the screens, something is written.

"Thanks for the data! Houka" can be read.

Masaru approaches Ichiro.

"D-director?" Masaru stutters. Ichiro sighs and licks his lips.

"The uh-uhm... Harime has uh, uploaded a trojan onto our security systems, Nud... Nudist Beach had access to it and has overwritten the security measures of the main manufacture in Nagoya and uhm... well... I uh, I don't know how to explain it, they..." he

continues to stutter with a red face. Ichiro closes his eyes, then inhales with his nose deeply and exhales again...

Some time later...

It's 9 PM meanwhile. Ryuko chills in her room. Without Satsuki, it became rather boring. Houka and Nonon are busy with hacking or practicing certain music compositions, and Sanageyama as well as Gamagori exercise. That's why she and Senketsu just watch TV.

"Man... only junk today..." she mumbles bored and switches through the channels. Senketsu looks up to her. He sits next to Ryuko.

"Well maybe we just caught a bad time." he considers. Ryuko nods.

"Yeah, probably. I'll be right back." she mentions and stands up. Senketsu jumps to the remote.

"Alright. I'll see if I can find something interesting. It's probably difficult, but I won't give up." he chuckles.

"Yeah, that's right!" Ryuko smiles and leaves the room. She walks through the halls of the Nudist Beach HQ and then visits the canteen. Mikisugi is working on a popcorn machine. Tsumugu takes a little break to smoke a cigarette quickly while Mikisugi reads the manual.

"Alright so if we put the screws on the box, it should work." Mikisugi mentions. Ryuko lurks out behind a wall and decides to not disturb them while working. The lights meanwhile are slightly weaker since it's dark outside already. Walking back to her room turns slightly difficult as she feels dizzy again, and she briefly even loses her orientation, causing her to almost fall down.

"Oh man..." she mumbles dizzy and opens the door to her room, visiting the bathroom to clean her face in the hope to get rid of the dizziness.

"You good, Ryuko?" Senketsu asks worried.

"Yeah, I'm good, just a bit dizzy." she smiles and closes the bathroom door. Then she starts the sink and collects some water on her hands, washing her face. It didn't help however. Suddenly, she starts coughing, her vision fades away, and everything turns dark for a brief moment, until she ultimately coughs blood that lands into the sink. Ryuko falls on her back. After taking a deep breath, she stands up and realizes her mouth and chin has some blood on it now.

"What... the hell...?" she mumbles afraid.

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Snow falls outside. Satsuki and Nui sit in a cafe at the highway. Ôsaka is still two hours away. Both have a tea and two plates with some snacks, but they are done eating already. After the battle, they haven't talked much to each other. Nui has been quiet almost the entire time, and Satsuki thought about Senketsu and Ryuko the entire time. Satsuki finally breaks the silence however.

"So... I guess Senketsu is indeed not the one we thought he would be." Satsuki mentions quiet.

"Mhm." Nui reacts.

"Something bothers you." Satsuki notices. Nui hesitates at first.

"Ichiro... he made an offer. It sounded too good to be true, and the worst thing is, he was telling me the truth." Nui answers.

"What offer?"

"He promised me if I would work for him, I would get a place back at the Life Fibers and maybe even become part of the High Entity, or...

or become one of these "primordial Life Fibers."

"I see. Hm. This makes me curious. It sounds like something you would have wanted."

"Yes, but... I couldn't accept it."

"Why?"

"It feels wrong. It's not right. He was supposed to kill me, yet he did not. Instead, he promised me everything I wanted. And he said, that I would be... well..."

"Yes?"

"Actually... it's nothing you will understand." Nui draws back all of a sudden. Satsuki nods but decides to not ask further.

"Well... I'm thankful to know you did not choose to accept his offer. To be quite frank with you, I of course have trust issues towards you, just like everyone else. When you told me this morning you would never betray anyone, I didn't believe that. But this indeed did show me I was wrong. Thank you."

"Uhm... no problem." Nui answers hesitantly once more.

"If I may ask... did he try to kill you?"

"He did. But he spared me. Satsuki... for a moment I thought everything would be over. You'll of course not care about it, but... I don't want to go back. I... don't want to go back to the place they've sent me."

"What does it look like?"

"It's... a dark room. Dead quiet and empty and calm and... so big, no human mind can comprehend it. And then there is me... and a single light that marks an exit. But I can never reach the exit because I hear an echo coming towards me. I can hear a death scream of myself."

And there are Life Fibers. They taunt and harass me, call me names, tell me I should go... but I can't. I can't even eat or sleep. I wish I would die, but I can't because I already am dead. So I... I starve and are supposed to wander around in this empty room." Nui sighs. Satsuki nods and puts her cup of tea away. She swallows.

"Is this why you hate the Life Fibers so much?"

"... mhm. That... and the High Entity... and my Doppelgänger."

"... what would you wish to be different?" Satsuki asks careful. It almost sounds like she would care for Nui to an small extent, even shows pity. It wouldn't be the first time Satsuki would talk with someone with a piercing fate, if you think about the past with her four friends.

"I... I sometimes wish people would, I... it would be nice if... if..."

"Harime. I'm not going to hurt you. You prove me I don't have to be afraid of your next move."

"I... just wish that... honestly sometimes I don't know whether I am right or wrong with everything. I mean, about being a Life Fiber. Or... Ichiro said my understanding of love would be paradox, Satsuki. Is that true?" she asks worried.

"We cannot choose our origins, Harime. There is no need to be ashamed of that. I've learned a while ago that I am a Kiryuin. No matter how much I hate mother, and now matter how disgraceful my name might be, it is what it is, and I have to make the best out of it. I'm struggling with this thought even today. Mother visits me in her dreams sometimes. Sometimes she appears as a hallucination and talks with me. I can see her right now. She stands behind you and smiles at me." Satsuki mentions. Nui looks up and turns around.

"Where?"

"To your left shoulder." Satsuki says and looks into Ragyo's cold eyes. Nui nods slowly and looks back at Satsuki.

"And regarding your question... Harime, I believe you are a sick, delusional being. I believe the bit of humanity you had left your body the moment my mother sent you out to Nagoya."

"I never had humanity in the first place, because I am no human."

"But you behaved like one. Until that day. I'm not blaming you. I don't even hate you anymore."

"You don't? But... why do you interact with me then?"

"Love, or friendship does not require hate. Traumatic incidents, hate, and fights can disturb a relationship, but it can also strengthen it. I had countless fights with Ryuko after you were gone. But we always came back to each other." Satsuki explains. Nui nods briefly.

"If it is about you having to die once Ichiro is gone... I can't change what happened, Nui. My view is that Life Fibers have to disappear from this world. They feast on humans like parasites for thousands of years. I've sworn an oath the day my father left - to defeat my mother and end the Life Fibers for good. I will not break my oath, not as long as I have breath in my body." Satsuki explains. Nui doesn't answer. Satsuki stands up.

"However..."

Nui looks up to Satsuki.

"... I believe in redemption. Those who wander with a broken heart through this cruel world and corrupted by the deeds and words of others... those can find redemption if they are worthy to it."

"..."

"I don't believe a psychopath like you can comprehend this. Know that I do not hate you for killing my father, or for you being a Life

Fiber. It's the fault of my mother."

"..."

"Then again, life surprises me always. Maybe I am wrong." Satsuki finishes. Nui hesitates.

"Satsuki?"

"Yes?"

"The world is unfair."

"It is. Do your best, Harime. You might be on a good path..."

...

...

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Nui smiles.

A Withering Flower

Life Fibers sing quietly in the background. Steps sound through the deserted and dark halls of the Honnouji Academy. In the deep halls below the Academy, where the Life Fibers seem to live, Couturiers keep an eye out - they wear the most beautiful and surreal clothes humanity has ever seen. The walls and pillars of the halls are still infested with Life Fibers, yet they shine brighter than before, and in the center of the huge hall, a huge pile of Life Fibers lie around. These are millions. The Couturiers seem to wear robes, and their faces cannot be seen due to the masks they seem to wear.

"Director... the purification is in full swing. It will take many more Life Fibers to lead your plans to a victory, yet be assured, it will not take long anymore." one of the Couturiers says to Ichiro as he enters the hall, with a frightening calm voice.

"Once these halls are filled and the sisters - Kiryuin, Matoi, and Harime - are dead, the High Entity will purify this world and turn it into a place, habitable for the Life Fibers."

"It will not take long anymore."

"Once Kiryuin and Matoi are broken and Harime dead, these halls will be filled. Humanity doesn't deserve a place on this otherwise beautiful world. Weaklings in many ways, where they could be so much stronger."

"Poor, lost souls, that cannot deal with our god like powers..."

"Yes... let the High Entity know about our progress. The Fiber factories will stop only when we have enough of our own."

"Very well..."

...

The next day...

"Woosh..."

Sanageyama sits alone in the canteen.

"Woooooosh..."

He makes a flat hand and pretends it to be a plane.

"Niyoooo..."

Satsuki enters the room and looks amazed as she see's the man with the white jacket and the green tanktop sitting at the desk, doing... this.

"Ahm..." Satsuki clears her throat with a bright smile. Sanageyama looks to Satsuki and blushes.

"Satsuki!" he reacts surprised and stops immediately.

"Interesting way of spending your time, indeed." Satsuki mentions interested and sits down next to her friend.

"Well I'm waiting for Ira at the moment, Mikisugi said he needs our help for some constructions regarding this weird Zeppelin thingy he and his boys are building."

"A second "Naked Sun."

"Pretty much, yeah. Wonder if we can finish that thing."

"With enough man power, I can imagine it."

"Mhm. You look tired, man. More than usual." Sanageyama mentions.

"I did sleep bad, yes."

"You always do. I know you, what's up?"

"When Harime and I escaped yesterday, her... Doppelgänger wanted to talk with me in the old Kiryuin manor."

"Okay."

"It's... about Ryuko. To be honest, I... I am afraid of what will happen. Something is clearly wrong with her or the Kamui and I am worried about it." Ryuko's big sister admits. Sanageyama listens carefully.

"I'm afraid something happens to her. I should be the one afraid of terrible things... after all, I'm just a human. Not like Ryuko. You could shoot her in the head, she would just stand up again and continue."

"I gotcha."

"Am I too worried, Uzu? I... fear I'm always too afraid of what might happen to Ryuko. I just want to see her safe."

"I think Ryuko's sick as hell. People can try to kick her ass and she just stands up and kicks their balls. Sure, a bit of carefulness is always good if you ask me, but I believe you're too worried at the moment, yeah. Not that you are a bad sister, I mean... damn, you're doing everything for her just so she can have a good life. You give her money, you offer her a job at REVOCS if everything fails, you'll give her free time, hell, you even renovated her Matoi mansion... if it wouldn't be for this disease, I could imagine you guys would just travel the world or something."

"Yes... that is something we wanted to do. I still believe it was a bad idea of me to really get rid of REVOCS. I just thought I could get away from this immense responsibility. It's not like the Academy. I sometimes ask myself what became out of me."

"I think you've become a badass woman with dominance complexes." Sanageyama grins. Satsuki chuckles slightly.

"Dominance complexes?" she asks grinning.

"Yeah well that might have been a bit harsh now, but if you would be the same person five years ago, you'd have a hard time in life, I believe. Don't make yourself feel bad just because you became sentimental. We all are, even me."

"I suppose so."

"We'll kick this REVOCS guy back to space and then I'll invite you to a beer or something. Or Sake. You drinking?"

"No. Rarely a sake."

"Me neither. Good thing you don't."

"Yes." Satsuki answers. Mikisugi and Gamagoori appear.

"Morning." Mikisugi says in a good mood.

"Ah, Mikisugi. Hello." Satsuki reacts.

"Tsumugu and I dealt with this popcorn machine. Sat there till 2 AM. We found out we actually got the wrong screws delivered, but we found a solution and now the machine works perfectly fine. The popcorn's good."

"Glad to hear that."

"Ryuko did tried it out too already. So this machine really attracts Nui into shutting her mouth whenever she got popcorn?"

"I assume so."

"Neat. Alright, Sanageyama. You guys gotta start soon." Mikisugi orders. Sanageyama stands up and follows Mikisugi and Gamagoori out of the room.

"Well... I should seek up Nonon." Satsuki says to herself.

Iori in the meantime experiments with Life Fibers in the workshop. Nui and Tsumugu visit the workshop.

"Now, Life Fiber, if you already have to make trouble, at least make yourself useful and work here. Iori can always use a helping hand and since you are one of these soulless clothes yourself, help him out whenever you can." Tsumugu orders badly mooded. Nui's presence alone annoys him.

"Soulless? I have feelings too! Besides, why should I help this amateur?"

"Because I will send Ryuko to you if you don't."

"Even better!"

"With the scissor blades." Tsumugu continues. Nui's pupils increase.

"HEY, AMATEUR! Here I come!" Nui grins, pats Tsumugu's shoulders and then dances to Iori who's rather unimpressed about having her here.

"Alright, sparrow brain! So what are we going to do today?! We could sew some COVERS if you like!" Nui suggests curious.

"Tempting offer, Miss Harime, but I have to decline. Sit down, please." Iori answers calm. Nui watches him interested, but at the same time, she is also disgusted, seeing how Iori works mainly with machines.

"Harime, you as experienced tailor could surely help me out with Mr. Inumuta's Uniform, I assume? It's on the desk next to you, the blue one." Iori continues. Nui turns her head to the desk and investigates Houkas uniform. There are no three stars, just like the rest of the uniforms, like Nonon's, or Satsuki's, but they work pretty similar. Small keyboards and data pads - basically bars that can be filled - are everywhere on the uniform, with green colors, and the inner

gloves are green as well. Other than that Nui is slightly impressed about how smooth the uniform feels. A bit too smooth for her taste.

"This is Houka Inumuta's uniform. I call it the "Impulse Regalia."

"I don't care." Nui grins.

"Please take a look at it and see after small errors in the Fiber structure. The machines I'm using work very well but I do sometimes see small issues in the uniforms - nothing world breaking or anything, but still a nuisance."

"It's flawless." Nui answers. Iori turns his head surprised to Nui.

"How can you know that?!"

"Oh please, sweetheart, I'm a Life Fiber myself. I'm the first person who will see issues, if there are any." Nui grins.

"I see."

"It's still bad. And you are weird."

"Why's that?" Iori asks calm. It's admiring how calm he acts during Nui's presence, Tsumugu or Ryuko would have gone angry already.

"Everyone calls me soulless but I'm starting to wonder if it's not people like you who are soulless!" Nui says curious.

"What do you mean by that?"

"I doubt you have a soul."

"Does that have anything to do with the uniform specifically?"

"Only a soulless Couturier would use machines to produce his clothes. You want to be Satsuki's best Couturier!? Haha, this sounds so stupid, it's not even funny anymore." Nui jokes. Iori raises his eye brows.

"And how do you sew your clothes?"

"Well, with my hands, that's why I have them!"

"... with your hands?" he asks perplexed. Nui reacts shocked.

"You're going to tell me you don't work with your hands?" Nui asks, slightly insulted by this reaction.

"I do, but machines work faster and just as efficient." Iori answers confused by Nui.

"Why do you humans even have hands? I'm Life Fiber, I don't even have hands by default and I LOVE them! This just proves once again that you humans all are weird and overprivileged." Nui continues. Iori shakes his head and smiles slightly.

"I agree with you that humans are overprivileged to an extent, not all of them, but some, no doubt about that, however, I believe you underestimate the efficiency of machines."

"Nope. Machines are soulless just like you!"

"Of course." he chuckles.

"You don't believe me, do you?" Nui asks.

"I believe in facts. That's all. I am tailor and researcher."

"Well I'll prove you that Life Fibers have feelings! You got to handle them with love. Imagine everything you tailor would be your personal child. It would have a really bad daddy, but the results would be better."

Iori puts his tools down and watches Nui interested.

"Let's pretend I believe you, what would I have to do?"

"Sew everything with your hands. It'll take longer and requires more precision you probably don't have, buuuuuut this makes sure that you actually work with your clothes, and when you do THAT, your clothes will be even more efficient, after all, you tailored them with love. Well or at least you produced them without the crap around you."

"So you sew everything with your hands?"

"I even use my teeth if I have to." Nui grins and plays with her fingernails a bit.

"... interesting. Tell me more, please, I believe this is nonsense but I'll listen to you if you then work on the uniform."

"Perfect, amateur! I'll show you how to make the BEST clothes a human could possibly make. Alright, first of all..."

...

In the meantime, Ryuko reads a Manga with Senketsu. The one she talked about a good time ago already. Senketsu doesn't understand a word since he never learned to write or read, which is why Ryuko reads everything out for him.

"How could you do that, Justice!? Hayden is crazy, he destroyed everything we loved, you can't just work together with him now!" Ryuko reads. Senketsu looks at the various images excited.

"But if I won't work with him together, it won't just be Hayden who took everything away. I need him."

"Oh well. This is indeed a predicament." Senketsu comments.

"Yeah it is. But I wanna find out how it ends now. It's good you are here, gives me a reason to read everything from the start again. What do you think so far?"

"It's good. I like Justice, and this Hayden with the green hair does appear like a mad person, but I believe he has a reason in the things he does."

"You think so?"

"I mean, we also went crazy in the Honnouji-Academy just to get to Satsuki, right?" he chuckles. Ryuko grins.

"One point for you."

"Hehehe."

"Anyway, where did I stopped? Ah yeah, there..."

...

Satsuki walks through the halls of the Nudist Beach base, passing by the dormitory. Behind the dormitories is a common room where music comes out quietly. Sounds like classical music, as Satsuki notices quickly. Nonon has to be there. As she opens the door, Satsuki notices Nonon playing the "Spring Song" of Felix Mendelssohn with her Nui clones. It sounds surprisingly good and every tone is hit well. The room itself is rather unspectacular however - tables and chairs, a TV, nothing special. The heir of REVOCS sits down on a chair with an impressed face expression and watches the musician group play. As the group stops, Satsuki claps with her hands. Nonon smiles as she turns around and see's Satsuki, while Nui's clones - all wearing nice orchester uniforms in purple and yellow - bow down briefly. The clones then carefully lay down their instruments and await Nonons orders.

"Hello Nonon." Satsuki smiles.

"Satsuki, what do you think about my musicians?" Nonon asks proud.

"I'm surprised." she answers genuine and leans back, closing her arms in the dark room. She sits in a corner of the room. The podest is lightened up by nice, yellow colors.

"Right? Clones! Play the composition once more and show me you can do it without me!" Nonon orders satisfied. The clones nod and then grab their instruments once more. They start playing again. Nonon approaches Satsuki and sits down next to her, while the clones slowly play the music in the background.

"Honestly, Satsuki? With these clones it's one hell of a fun to make music. At first they were even more annoying than their mistress, but when I gave them their instruments and a composition, they got pleasantly tame and after a few hours it's as if I would have been working with some experienced musicians already. I'm sitting here since 6 AM. They are inhumanly good - in a literal way." Nonon grins happy.

"I can hear it. They hit the tones precisely."

"Yep! I need to give them a challenge. God I'm so excited for the "Tritsch Tratsch Polka" from Johann Strauss II! My, this is gonna be amazing with them!" Nonon happily continues. Satsuki chuckles.

"You love that composition, do you?"

"It's one of my favourites!"

"I can tell."

"Hehe. Now, you seem like you've been searching for me, what can I do for you?"

"I... could use a small group with who I could then travel to the old manor of my mother. Harime is busy with Iori, Ryuko said she wants to read this Manga with Senketsu, and our three friends are busy with the Zeppelin and the security systems of Neo-REVOCS. So I figured I ask you if you..."

"Do not ask further, I'm in!"

"Wh-wha, I mean..."

"Satsuki, you know you don't have to ask me, I'm always coming with you when you need me, after all, I can count on you too." Nonon explains smiling. Satsuki nods grateful.

"Of course. Thank you." she answers.

"So, only we two?"

"I'm gonna ask Mikisugi and Tsumugu if they can join us. I assume we could land in a small skirmish. Their DTR could be useful."

"Isn't the manor deserted?"

"It is. But Harime's Doppelgänger told me he'll be there to talk with me. It's... about Senketsu."

"Oh... sounds ugly."

"I don't know what will happen. It might be better anyway if Ryuko doesn't join."

"Yeah, I understand. You can count on me. No matter how annoying it'll get, if this stupid dude starts getting on your nerves, he'll hear music that will sound through his body for his entire life!" Nonon chuckles. Satsuki nods.

"I trust you on that." Satsuki answers.

"So, when do we go?"

"I want to talk with Mikisugi and Tsumugu first, then we can depart."

"Nice. "My" clones have the order to follow me wherever I go. They can fight too if they have to, their instruments are infused with Life Fibers."

"Sounds good." Satsuki answers and stands up with Nonon. Both listen to the end of the composition, and then, Nonon collects her clones and puts them into a small bag as they shrunk again.

...

The door to the presidential office opens. A pile of notes are on Ichiro's desk. Masaru looks around.

"Director?" Masaru asks confused. The Grand Couturiers quarters door opens. Ichiro doesn't react.

"Ah, Director. I wanted to ask if we should increase the security of the main manufacture."

"Not necessary. They won't destroy the main manufacture, it's too risky for that." Ichiro answers calm and puts the notes into a drawer, then he trims his bowtie and turns around to Masaru with an expectant look.

"I see."

"Masaru, I'll leave Neo-REVOCS to you. I have to talk with Kiryuin."

"Ah yes, you've mentioned her. Samurai and Ashigaru are ready as you wished."

"Good, they could be useful."

"Indeed." Masaru answers as he see's Ichiro passing him while chuckling. Ichiro pulls out some Life Fibers out of his hands and looks at them... they do look different than the normal ones. A white Fiber moves through it.

"This will be enough." he smiles and leaves the room while looking at the Fiber.

"Oh well... I don't know if it is a good idea to leave the main manufacture as it is." Masaru doubts quietly to himself...

Some time later...

A light blizzard rules over the island. Forests and mountains are visible. Some smoke rises due to the Nudist Beach transporter that drives through it. As the transporter stops after a few minutes, the backdoor opens. Satsuki and Nonon leave it. In the transport room, the DTR of Mikisugi and Tsumugu is packed in, separated from each other so that it can be loaded into the huge car without problems. Mikisugi and Tsumugu leave the drivers and passenger seats and prepare their DTR while Satsuki and Nonon take a look around the manor which can be approached via a long and noble street. The walls of the manor still stand, however, the gates are open. Satsuki and Nonon enter the manor.

Everything is devastated. In the middle of the huge complex where once the main building of the manor was, all that is left of it is a huge crater with dead Life Fibers and snow. Around the crater, ruins form the landscape inside the manor. Debris lie in the crater as well. No one went to this place after the destruction of the location - it is prohibited to enter the area, but no one seemed to guard it. But why? It could have been Ichiro's work once again, but no one can determine it for sure. A few parts of the bath halls are still intact, window halls... and a garden district which happened to take lesser damage than the other parts of the complex. There is also a pavillion. Other than that - everything is ruined. Mikisugi and Tsumugu enter the complex with their DTR and look around in their huge mech. It's pretty much the same from years ago, yet with small adjustments for Neo-REVOCS. There is armored glass around the head and leg area to protect the pilots from bullets. Their weapons are attached on the arms. Mikisugi's arm has a blade for melee combat, Tsumugu's arm has a huge assault rifle with only one mag, but with more than enough needles. Needles, since the rifle can only use Anti synchronizer needles - these were used on Tsumugu's submachinegun too already. This is pretty much just a larger variant.

"This place has seen better days probably." Mikisugi notices.

"Thanks to the Life Fibers."

"Mhm. Tsumugu, you can prepare yourself for a fight already, I doubt this will be a quiet afternoon."

"Hm. Yeah."

"Satsuki told me Harime's Doppelgänger wants to speak about Ryuko's Kamui and I suppose we've been right with the assumption this was all a trap, question is, what kind of trap?"

"We're working with more Life Fibers than we should, Aikuro. The Kamui, the psychopath... what next?"

"I know... I know... I don't like it either." Mikisugi answers and slowly walks with Tsumugu through the area.

Meanwhile, Satsuki and Nonon walk through the garden district. As Satsuki looks to the pavillion, she stands still all of a sudden. Nonon looks at Satsuki confused. Nonon's Valkyrie Regalia have a red orchester uniform and a wing symbol on the back.

"Satsuki?" Nonon asks worried.

"Mother stands there." she reacts. Nonon watches the pavillion.

"She's watching me. Again, and again. I feel like she's always there..."

...

A strong wind howls. Satsuki and Ragyo walk through the garden district and enter the pavillion that protects them from the wind. From here you can see beautiful flowers, hedges, even a small pond. Statues and ornaments are everywhere. The young, 14 year old Satsuki looks up to Ragyo as they sit down in the pavillion. It's warm here.

"What is it that you wished, mother?" Satsuki asks calm. Her hatred is unnoticed.

"Your suggestion regarding this academy... I've looked at your "concepts and ideas." I'm... surprised. The potential is there. I ask myself though..." Ragyo reacts and thinks loud while piercing Satsuki's eyes with her own.

"... why is it that you came up with this idea?" she asks, seemingly in distrust.

"I don't understand, mother."

"Your behaviour is remarkably different ever since your father left you. What is it that sleeps inside you? Burning hatred?" she continues.

"My hatred is aimed at my father and all of those who are with him, yes."

"Yet he is dead and your hatred is as strong as ever."

"Hatred lives on even after it's origin has vanished. Father's death changes nothing." Satsuki answers resolved. Ragyo seems resolved as well, but she can't really say if Satsuki is telling her the truth or not, and so, she reacts with a slow nod."

"So it is not only your devotion on the worldly, the corporation of ours, that allowed you to live the way you do, but also the hate and hostility towards everything that denies our plans and our principles?"

"Yes."

"Interesting. My child... it is fascinating to see all this discipline, combined with your emotions. Attributes of a strong, authoritarian person. With your feelings, you are able to convince and manipulate those you need, with the right words, and the discipline that lives inside you will grant you absolute dominance. A young, proud woman like you could be able to command entire armies if she wishes to, similar to me, with a fashion empire. You do remind me of

myself every once in a while. Stand up." she orders. Satsuki stands up slowly and looks up to Ragyo. Ragyo pets her cheek softly.

"I will prepare everything. Soon, once your graduation is completed, you will form the top of the food chain, the top that cannot be devoured, for you will be the "Student Council President" of Honnouji-Academy... and those who will resist you will be eradicated. Find a group of loyal men and women that share your strengths and use them to your advantage. Everyone is a tool for your great ambitions."

"Yes, mother. Thank you." Satsuki answers submissive.

"Enjoy this weather. These forces of nature... wind... rain... fire... they cannot be stopped. And neither will be you." Ragyo finishes and slowly leaves the pavillion...

...

"Hey?" Nonon asks worried. Satsuki shakes her head.

"Excuse me, Nonon. I've been thinking."

"No worries." she answers. Mikisugis and Tsumugus DTR arrives.

"Hey, girls, what are you waiting for?" Mikisugi asks.

"We're on our way." Nonon answers and continues walking with Satsuki and the DTR. Together, the group walks through the ruins of the destroyed Kiryuin manor. With the strength of the DTR, Satsuki and Nonon can get through the broken area. As the group arrives at the crater, they can see Ichiro in the middle of it, seemingly sewing something at the moment. He is busy, that's for sure. However, it's not visible what he is working on at the moment. The group stands still for a brief moment to talk, while the DTR looks around.

"I'll speak with him." Satsuki says.

"I'm going with you." Nonon whispers. Satsuki nods grateful. Both women carefully walk down the crater, stepping onto debris and dead Life Fibers, the burned ground and the cold snow, while Mikisugi and Tsumugu scan the area. Ichiro hears them approaching him and raises his head. Satsuki's heel clicks... but the click is weak, anything but impressive... it lost its power. Ichiro smiles and shakes his head about that.

"Fear is freedom... subjugation is liberation... and contradiction is truth." he quotes and slowly turns around to Satsuki.

"All the resolve seems to be vanished. But I can't blame you, Satsuki Kiryuin. Do not worry. I am, what people what call, a fan of yours. I love this speech of yours." he smiles and looks at the DTR, then Nonon.

"And you are Nonon Jakuzure. And these two... hm, perverts... are Aikuro Mikisugi and Tsumugu Kinagase. I've heard about all of you."

"Talk, Harime." Satsuki orders.

"Digging through memories is well spent time. That is my way of learning about all of you. The memories of your mother, Ragyo Kiryuin, gave me quite the insight on your life. She lives forth, as a mere Life Fiber, one of many. The death of her human shell brought her to us."

"She... is alive?"

"No, no, not the way you'd imagine it no. She doesn't walk around as a Life Fiber, aha... no, she lives through her memories. Whenever we want, we can take a look at her life, the same goes for everyone who is, or was inside the Hive mind once. Isn't that similar to what my predecessor said to you?"

"How do you know that?"

"Well it would be obvious if I say I'm Nui, but better, and with her memories, and that is why I know what she would say... problem is: I do not. Do you love your sister, Satsuki?"

"..."

"Of course you do. You sacrificed your entire life to avenge your sister. Untamed love for something that should have never existed. It wasn't just because of your father, was it?"

"Oh would you get straight to the point already, you doofus?! Satsuki, these naked maniacs that'll probably get a cold and me don't have time the entire day!" Nonon gripes annoyed about Ichiro's tortuous way of speaking. Following up, Ichiro takes a few steps back until Satsuki and Nonon can see a small box like object made out of Life Fibers. The Director grabs it and gently pulls it up in the air. The "box" builds itself apart, and some kind of window appears. Ichiro leans next to the window frame. Inside that window, Ryuko's room is visible. You can see the manga she's holding in her hands. Ryuko turns to the next page. Ichiro's eye lights up briefly in a red color.

"Hm. Looks like your sister is reading a Manga. How boring." he grins.

"What is this supposed to be?" Satsuki asks nervous.

"You were of course totally right when you said that Senketsu is indeed a trap. Just like Nui who recognized it. But you would never trust someone like her, would you? Especially someone like Ryuko." he chuckles.

"So that is why you knew what we were doing... you can see everything Senketsu can see." she realizes. Mikisugi and Tsumugu both are annoyed by this fact and hold their weapons ready.

"Sure... but that's not the joke about Senketsu." he answers and stands himself in front of the window. Life Fibers crawl out of his hands and land next to him. A "clone" of Ryuko appears, completely

naked... well, almost, the private parts are not visible because they are not existent, it's just the mere body.

"You've spent your entire life to avenge, or protect your sister. Defeated your mother with her, brought my species to the verge of annihilation, and yet you were not able to protect her from something so simple like a sickness inside everyone's head. A sickness that plagues many lives. I'm using this sickness to get close to you and especially to your sister Ryuko." he explains pulls out some kind of Life Fiber, shining in red and white.

"This is a Life Fiber of the High Entity. These can heal absolutely every wound and nullify it's symptoms. You could get split apart as a human, but once this Life Fiber is inserted into you, it will revive you and vanish. This single Life Fiber is worth more than anything you've ever seen. However... if you corrupt this Fiber..." he explains and rips the Life Fiber apart, turning it into a completely black one.

"... and then insert it onto an object or body..." he continues and inserts the Life Fiber on Ryuko's upper body, in a way that Satsuki can clearly see what he is doing. Suddenly, the skin on the clone slowly becomes pale, and blood slowly leaves the mouth, the eyes, the ears, even the finger nails.

"... then you will slowly dry the wearer out, until they are nothing more than a pile of skin."

...

"And that is exactly what is happening with your sister. Slowly but steady, her body will die, all because of her love towards her friend Senketsu, and most importantly, because you were unable to protect her."

...

"You will lose her... before her body is dried out... and in the end..."

The clone falls apart and on the ground. Dead Life Fibers hover up and slowly vanish. Nothing more than skin and some blood is left.

"... she will be dead."

Satsuki's eyes are ice cold. Nonon, Mikisugi and Tsumugu watch the Director of Neo-REVOCS disgusted, while he looks at Satsuki unimpressed.

"Time is running... first headaches... then coughing blood... then shortness of breath... palpitations... similar to anemia, yet lethal of course, until she lost her consciousness. She will never be able to stand up once that happens. And all of that, because her love towards Senketsu was so strong, she never even once considered not putting him on. Senketsu Azami... my masterpiece."

"..."

"But... there is a chance of saving her." he suddenly says and smiles. His smile is sinister, yet slightly playful. Wicked, and subtle. Ichiro pulls out a vial with a blue liquid inside and holds it up.

"The cure for the Life Fiber sickness. Your sister can be saved. But you will have to give her up. Bring her to Neo-REVOCS, armed with the scissor blades, and let her surrender. Then, I will promise you with my life and the ones of every last Life Fiber that she will be allowed to continue living. Her blood will regenerate. Her nightmares will be gone. Her hallucinations, if she has them, will vanish, and her life will be a normal one again." Ichiro grins wicked and suddenly throws the vial on the ground. The liquid mixes up with the snow. It's useless now.

"I won already. And I haven't even hurt you once." he smiles happy. Satsuki holds her Katana tight. Nonon can feel the aura of hatred that goes through Satsuki - everyone is.

"You seem angry." Ichiro notices and leans towards Satsuki.

"... you'll pay for this." Satsuki reacts quiet, full of hate. Ichiro nods.

"You'd love to kill me with your sword, 'Empress' Blade," wouldn't you? Rip my torso apart... in the end, you lost after all." he laughs.

"I'm done now." Nonon reacts angry and activates her Valkyrie Regalia. Wings spread out of her back, and then she throws the bag with clones on the ground, with the clones climbing out and expand, holding their instruments ready.

"You are disgusting! I thought auntie Ragyo would be gross but YOU TRULY ARE A MANIAC! THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU!?" Nonon screams and slams her fist against Ichiro's face. She hits him pretty well although he's not knocked or anything. He looks impressed. Ashigaru appear all of a sudden, and Samurai circle around the crater.

"Ouch." he chuckles and forms his right arm into a blade, attacking Nonon, but in the last moment, Satsuki draws her blade and blocks the attack. Both blades are almost in Nonon's face, however, the musician stands resolved and brave rather than scared. Satsuki looks into Ichiro's eyes with an ice cold look.

"Don't you dare..." Satsuki threatens. Ichiro grins and pulls out a ball of Life Fibers, which he throws next to him.

"Oh don't you worry. I prefer to avoid fights, as they are a waste of time." he chuckles and transforms his arm back. After that, he takes a few steps back. In the meantime, the Samurai slowly walk down the crater, approaching Satsuki, Nonon and her clones. The Ashigaru aim at the DTR and unlock their weapons, with the DTR taking out Tsumugu's assault rifle.

"Orders, mistress?" a clone asks Nonon.

"Play the composition I've taught you. This is gonna be loud, annoying, and incredibly ugly." Nonon reacts and walks to her

clones. Samurai draw their swords. The chorus starts, and the clones start singing together.

(AN: I HIGHLY (!) suggest you search up "KILL la KILL IF - Theme of Satsuki" on YouTube and listen to it before or while reading. The reason for that is because Satsuki (and everyone else on the battlefield) actually hears the music too! So why not try it out? :D)

"I'm not here to fight against you, Satsuki Kiryuin, I'm here to break you apart with my beautiful mind games! However, the one who will ascend now has been tormented by you and vice versa, and should you truly lack of resolve, your friends will die, and he will bring you to me! Hahaha!" Ichiro laughs dirty. Satsuki watches the Life Fiber evolving from the ground.

"Kill Kiryuin's friends and take your old mistress as a hostage, do not hesitate to hurt her, just like she hurt you. I will await you, Kiryuin." Ichiro finishes his speech and leaves the battlefield. A humanoid being made out of Life Fibers appears. Orange-red, with a horrible grimace. Satsuki realizes due to the slightly blue shimmering eyes the one who stands in front of her.

"... Junketsu..." she mumbles shocked, as her Wrath Regalia are activated.

With horrible, empty eyes, shimmering in many layers - first white, then black, then red, and a small bit of blue, typical for Junketsu - he looks into Satsuki's eyes. Even though he is unable to show emotions due to the nature of Life Fiber faces, it is obvious that he seems to pine for Satsuki, and maybe hate as well. His arms are horribly deformed, they reach up to his kneecaps partially. Life Fibers hang on his shoulders, arms, back, the legs, even from his head, hovering around. Junketsu starts walking towards Satsuki in a language Satsuki cannot understand. It's as if he sings. Suddenly, he attacks Satsuki with his long arms, but she can dodge the attack. Nonon's clones sing in the background while using their instruments to produce sound waves in pink which incapacitate incoming Ashigaru and Samurai so that Mikisugi and Tsumugu can easily

attack the Neo-REVOCS units with their assault rifle. Needles and bullets fly through the air.

"You dare to oppose your mistress, Satsuki Kiryuin!?" Satsuki screams angry and commences a duel with Junketsu. Junketsu suddenly moves to her with literal inhuman speed, ramming her out of the crater. Even though Satsuki got hit, she is able to land fairly safe. She landed in the garden district. Looking up to Junketsu, snow flies around due to the light blizzard.

"Look at you, Junketsu... you follow the orders of a being that uses you as a tool just like every Life Fiber does. Your Life started in the very manor we are fighting in, and I will take your life here!" Satsuki screams and runs towards Junketsu who slings his deformed Life Fiber arms towards Satsuki. Satsuki dodges, slides under his attacks through and cuts off one of his arms with a precise attack. But how can she defeat Junketsu? After all, he can regenerate himself. A being like him probably can only be defeated with combined powers, and so, Satsuki decides to lure him away from her friends. Junketsu screams tormented, as if he would be sad and angry at the same time about the arm he just lost. With his left arm he attacks Satsuki, grabs her, flings her around and eventually slams her against a building. Satsuki spits out blood and stands up again.

In the meantime, Mikisugi and Tsumugu battle the incoming Samurai that approach Nonon's and her clones position. Thanks to the sound waves, the men in the DTR can fight off the Samurai fairly well although it takes a good chunk of needles to desynchronize a single Samurai's armor, causing it to explode and get naked. Nonon in the meantime flies around, fighting with a guitar that was infused with Life Fibers by Shiro Iori. With her guitar she can perform sound waves just like the clones, with the small difference that the longer her clones make music, the stronger Nonon's guitar sound waves become. Due to all the different directions the Ashigaru are attacked from, they start to overheat and do irrational decisions, such as shooting their own since their processors cannot calculate this situation well. Nonon notices Satsuki fighting Junketsu. Satsuki and

Junketsu enter an overpass made out of windows and continue fighting.

"Nonon! We could use your help down here!" Mikisugi yells. Ashigaru shoot at Mikisugi and Tsumugu, causing them to turn their backs on them to avoid further damage on the armored glass. While it can sustain damage, it shouldn't be an Ashigaru unit's main target.

"These guys shoot well." Tsumugu mentions and pulls out the ammo clip, taking a look at it.

"270 needles." he comments.

"Sounds good." Mikisugi answers confident. Tsumugu puts the ammo clip back into the weapon. The DTR turns around and continues firing.

Satsuki and Junketsu fight inside an window hall that leads to the bath halls. Junketsu seems to try to talk with Satsuki - he sings, but in a horrible voice pitch. It sounds tormented. With the Life Fibers on his body, he throws slings that pull Satsuki's legs, moving her to him. Satsuki however is able to cut them off before they arrive at Junketsu, and as she stands up, she is able to avoid a ground attack from her former Kamui. Piercing Junketsu's legs, she follows up with an over head attack which Junketsu however can counter with his arms. Life Fibers crawl out of his arms and wrap around Satsuki's Katana, forcing her to let it off. Now unarmed, Satsuki takes a few steps back while Junketsu throws the Katana out of the building and into the crater where the clones and Nonon fight against the few Samurai and Ashigaru that are left.

"You will yield to me!" Satsuki yells and jumps up as Junketsu performs a foot sweep with his arms. She punishes the attack with a dropkick that slams her old Kamui out of the window, however, Junketsu is able to grab her, and so, both fall through the ruins a few dozens of meters. Junketsu falls through the rooftop of the nearby building and the floor ceilings. Just as Satsuki is about to be pierced by a debris, Junketsu pulls her to her and wraps himself around her,

protecting her from the fall damage. Both opponents land in the bath halls. The water here doesn't flow anymore but the statue in the middle of the room is still intact. Junketsu speaks to Satsuki once more as he stands up. What was Junketsu's intention of saving Satsuki? Sure, he has to take her hostage, but Ichiro said wounds are fine. Satsuki stands up and looks around, searching for a weapon as Junketsu follows her.

Nonon plays her guitar in the air and aims at hostile Neo-REVOCS Ashigaru that take cover in the ruins. Thanks to the sound waves, the ruins break apart, the Ashigaru fall down and are destroyed by that. From up here, Nonon has a good view about the battlefield. The clones make a good job combined with the firepower of the DTR. Seeing Satsuki and Junketsu fighting in the bath halls, she flies down to her best friend and rams Junketsu away just as he tried to jump onto her.

"Get away from her, you weirdo!" Nonon threatens Junketsu and slams her guitar against his head. Junketsu staggers away.

"Nonon! I need my sword! It's in the crater!" Satsuki yells stressed.

"I'll catch it!" Nonon reacts and flies away.

"One thing you gotta admit is that this is more fun than fighting against COVERS, that's for sure." Mikisugi says confident. With some patience and cautiousness, the Ashigaru aren't a big deal for the DTR, and the clones are doing a fantastic job.

"They're good to practice precise shots." Tsumugu reacts.

"What's the mag saying?" Mikisugi asks. Tsumugu pulls out the ammo clip.

"60."

"Cool." Mikisugi reacts and pulls the assault rifle away, then preparing the sword arm. Their DTR charges into the battlefield,

performing all-round attacks.

"Look at this great form!" Mikisugi yells as the Samurai are slinged away.

Satsuki avoids Junketsu's attacks. Suddenly, he slams his arms onto the ground and doesn't hit Satsuki on purpose. However, Life Fibers crawl through the ground and explode. The earth shatters, water and snow hurls up, and then, Life Fibers jump out and grab Satsuki, slamming her against the statue in the room. Junketsu moves with extreme speed towards Satsuki and clashes her face against the statue. She spits blood directly into Junketsu's face and hits her head against his. Junketsu doesn't react and proceeds to strangle Satsuki. Satsuki desperately is able to pull off the Life Fibers on her arms and then puts her hands onto Junketsu's face, pressing her thumbs into his eyes. Junketsu doesn't react at all to that, the pain he suffers doesn't seem to mind him, he even starts singing again. It sounds tormented once more. Slowly, Satsuki loses her vision and everything turns black, but Nonon rescues her and throws her Katana to Satsuki which she is able to grab and ram into Junketsu's head, incapacitating him briefly. Nonon helps Satsuki up.

"You alright!?" Nonon asks scared., holding her guitar ready. Satsuki nods.

"Y-yes, thanks." she answers and pulls the blade out. Junketsu moves through the ground and slams Nonon away. Loud steps are audible, and the shooting stops, which means that Mikisugi and Tsumugu are done fighting against the Ashigaru and Samurai. The clones stop singing, however, the melody is continued by them. They storm the halls with Mikisugi and Tsumugu. Junketsu is surrounded by the group now. The DTR pulls out his assault rifle again.

"Together?" Nonon asks.

"Together." Satsuki answers. Junketsu slams on the ground several times, Life Fibers explode in front of him and sling debris away, and while Satsuki and Nonon have to avoid the attacks, the DTR can

fight against Junketsu. Mikisugi and Tsumugu fire several times on Junketsu, weakening him with the Anti synchronizer needles that, even if they don't kill him, rob him of his strength. Junketsu screams apparently. He kneels down and tries a second attack, but he fails as the musician clones attack him with their instruments. With every sound wave hitting him, they get one step closer, and as they reach him, they pull his Life Fibers out of him with their finger nails, weakening him so much that he is actually vulnerable against common weapons like Satsuki's blade! The DTR kicks Junketsu away, and eventually, Nonon uses her guitar to fire sound waves towards Junketsu which slam him into the statue again, breaking it apart. Junketsu falls into the water, too weak to perform any more attacks. Nonon then makes a hand gesture to tell her clones to stop the music.

Silence. The musicians jump back into Nonons bag. Then, Nonon closes her bag and shrinks her guitar, turning her uniform back into the normal state again. Mikisugi and Tsumugu pull their weapon away.

Satsuki walks towards Junketsu and stands in front of him. Her former Kamui looks up to Satsuki. Even though it's not visible in it's face, Satsuki notices Junketsu didn't really wanted this fight. It wouldn't make any sense. Junketsu always wanted the control over Satsuki's body, but kill her? And now that he has an own body, why need Satsuki? Satsuki believes there is something else. She holds his cheek briefly. Junketsu is ice cold. He sings something slowly, and seemingly sad. Satsuki doesn't understand a single word.

"As much as I despise you, Junketsu, but you wouldn't want to kill me... that's not you." Satsuki realizes. Junketsu nods slowly.

"Was it truly your free will that wanted to fight me?" she asks. Junketsu slowly moves his head from the left, then to the right. Satsuki nods and holds her Katana ready.

"Without you, I would have never defeated my mother. I should thank you. Even though I despise you." she continues and holds it at

Junketsu's head.

"Thank you, friend. Rest in peace." Satsuki says and precisely cuts off Junketsu's head. Junketsu falls onto the ground.

Junketsu is dead. Truly dead now. His Life Fibers slowly lose color, then dissolve and hover up in the air, however, a few of them flow into Satsuki's blade and let it lighten up. Satsuki feels a slight increase of power as she holds her weapon. Junketsu disappears entirely, and Satsuki watches how his Life Fibers dissolve in the air completely, until only the snow is left.

She puts her weapon back into the sword scabbard and looks around. Her companions don't know what to say. Desperation is visible in her face.

"So what do we do now?" Nonon asks regarding Ryuko.

"... we cannot tell anyone what happened here. If I tell Ryuko what happened, she might flip out, surrender to Ichiro or does something different and equally dangerous. If she finds out what her Kamui does, she will lose her mind. She loves Senketsu. I can't do this to her. We have to find a way to..." Satsuki suddenly stops as she realizes there is a cure for the Life Fiber sickness.

"... to... produce the cure..." she mumbles in disbelief. And anxiety.

"Well I guess sneaking into Neo-REVOCS isn't in this time, huh?" Mikisugi asks.

"We should destroy this main manufacture in Nagoya and find out if they produce it there then. And we have to find a way to make sure this man doesn't spy on us." Tsumugu mentions.

"That's the plan. Luckily, Inumuta is almost done." Mikisugi continues.

"We'll do this, Satsuki. This ass gets what he deserves." Nonon says confident.

"... no one is allowed to find out about this. Promise it." Satsuki pleads.

"Sure."

"No problem."

"Yup."

Satsuki nods grateful, yet scared.

"Let's go. We cannot afford to lose time anymore..."

...

Evolution

AN: Sigh. This took longer than I expected. School really took away a large part of my free time. I can luckily write on the story while I am in the train (since I gotta use a train to get to school) but of course it does take up more time and days until I'm done. However, at least this became a long and really neat chapter in my opinion and I hope you guys like it. I assume the next chapter will come out in two or three weeks again, but maybe we are lucky and I am faster, we'll see. I have not forgotten about this story and I promise this story will be finished, I have so many great ideas you guys will love - and some will blow your mind, I promise. :) But for now, have fun reading!

Afternoon. Strong rain and thunder keeps Tokyo awake. Ragyo is in her presidential office, taking a look outside down to the city, while Nui lies on the desk of the director, looking at the ceiling - she is 15 now. The door opens, and the 16 year old Satsuki appears. Ragyo turns to Satsuki. Her daughter has a bag on her right arm - seemingly for school.

"Mother."

"My daughter. You should be in the manor." Ragyo notices.

"Yes. However, I need to talk with you. Some time ago, you ordered me to find a group of young people for the Honnouji-Academy. Back then, we were in the pavillion of our manor. You might remember."

"I do."

"I found four people that shall support my cause."

"Ah?" Ragyo reacts interested and walks to Satsuki. Satsuki pulls out a folder with several sheets of paper, which she then pins onto a wall. Four names, images and some information is visible. Nui takes a look at it, bored, but with a slight smile.

"Heyyyyyyy, Satsuki, how you doin?" Nui grins. Satsuki doesn't react. The three women take a look at the wall.

"Nonon Jakuzure. You know her already. I chose her as she is loyal to me, even in death she would stay on my side. She is, what I would call a "best friend." She'd do everything for me." Satsuki starts to explain. Ragyo investigates the documents Satsuki brought with her, while Nui peeks over Ragyo's shoulder.

"Ira Gamagoori. An extraordinary resolve and strong man. His power and strength is fueled by the pain he suffers from - I met him in my school. With a bit more time, he could become an idol of discipline, and a man that will never surrender." Satsuki continues. Ragyo nods.

"Uzu Sanageyama. Seemingly vain and a daredevil. He would never decline a battle, no matter how bad the chances are for him. Sanageyama is athletic, smart, and well trained in combat, especially with swords. With him and Gamagoori, Honnouji-Academy will be a reign of terror for those that do not wish to develop their powers. Natural selection..."

"I see."

"Houka Inumuta. A very intelligent man. He does seem to avoid confrontations, however, he is able to draw out every single detail of a person, their behaviour, their way of fighting, you name it. He calls this "data." Inumuta is the man who tried to hack into your corporation. I could use a man with such a great intellect. Knowing your enemy is the key to defeating them, according to him, and I agree it is a valuable tool." Satsuki finishes. Ragyo takes a closer look. On each document, several sentences and key points are written on, clean, but precise. Satsuki seems to know her friends very well, as Ragyo notices. Nui takes a look as well.

"Who are these snoring noses?" Nui grins and turns to Satsuki.

"Nui, leave the room." Ragyo orders. Nui looks surprised.

"What, why?" Nui asks curious.

"Satsuki and I have to talk. I do not need you right now."

"Alrighty!" Nui chuckles and leaves the office while Satsuki speaks to Ragyo.

Nui arrives in Hoomaru's office. Nui's observant looks up to her as she stands in front of her.

"Nui." Hoomaru greets calm.

"Hoomaru, my favorite human right after Satsuki! What are you doing right now?!" Nui asks curious and leans over Hoomaru's computer. A thunder rings out.

"Working, as you see."

"How boring."

"You have no idea..." Hoomaru answers.

"See, if you would have became Couturier, we both could sew some great clothes!"

"You don't get to choose your life path." Hoomaru answers. Nui sits down next to Hoomaru and looks at the computer. It does look boring indeed. Essentially, Hoomaru has a few monitors with open programs and documents, and there is also one program that displays the security measures of all the major facilities REVOCS has - obviously the REVOCS HQ for example, the main manufacture in Nagoya, or the port manufacture in Kanazawa, prefecture Ishikawa. REVOCS seems to have several large manufactures, spread all over Japan, but the one in Nagoya is the largest next to the REVOCS HQ.

"What led you to me, Nui?" Hoomaru asks.

"I'm bored."

"Hm. Well, I'm bored as well."

"It's like your weird office at home."

"Yes. I remember you took the flower vases from my office and took the water inside them to water the garden. I wasn't even angry at you because it was too hilarious to think about it. It still is." Hoomaru chuckles. Nui smiles.

"I did what Lady Ragyo ordered me to do!" Nui laughs.

"And you destroyed my computer."

"Well yes, but that was not on Ragyo's behalf."

"I'm grateful you destroyed it. If you wouldn't have done that, I probably still would sit there with the annoying Mr. Kuroido, hearing him rant about you."

"I could hurt Mr. Kuroido, if Lady Ragyo says so!" Nui smiles.

"Honestly, Nui? I believe it would be more fun to just annoy him. In general, killing people, as... well, as much as you like to hurt people, should be your last option."

"Why's that?"

"You could gain useful information. I know you are a very curious girl, and Lady Ragyo already said you should use your kind appearance as a tool, so why don't use it to find more out before doing the dirty work?"

"Hmmm..."

"Well, anyway, I'm glad you got to destroy my computer." Hoomaru grins. Nui chuckles.

"No problem, dear. You are still weird though."

"We all are weird, Nui."

"Except for me! I'm great."

"You are." Hoomaru answers to appeal Nui. Nui wouldn't attack Hoomaru, but having Nui on your side, as much as she would despise you, can be a huge advantage. And it seems like Hoomaru and Nui have a relationship that seems to be fully alright - Nui often insults and attacks Hoomaru verbally, yet there seem to be small lights in which both seem to laugh together. Of course this doesn't make Nui being a mean person to Hoomaru better. But it does show that there is a different side in her.

"So how are you doing?" Nui's observant asks.

"Like always. Bored by everyone. I want to have fun! Satsuki never plays with me, not even if I annoy her! I just want to play." Nui complains.

"I understand that. Lady Ragyo does not want you to interact with humans, unless it's Lady Satsuki or me... well, and maybe that security clown Yamamoto, which we luckily never need to see as he is always in his server room. Lady Ragyo does that to protect you. And I agree with her - every human I met is a selfish and evil person."

"Humans are stupid."

"That they are..." Hoomaru answers. Nui then stands up.

"Well, Hoomaru, I got to go!"

"What are you up to?"

"Making new friends! The best friend one can have is yourself after all! And you know, I don't have much of a choice anyway!" Nui chuckles, although this specific topic is rather depressing to think

about, having only yourself as a friend - or in other words, being lonely to a point where you make up your friends.

"Alright then. Don't forget that I'm going to ask you about the vocabulary you need to learn."

"Oui, mademoiselle Hoomaru!" Nui answers on french.

Arriving in her room, Nui sits down next to her personal sewing machine, taking a look at it. There's a pink dress she started. Therefore, Nui decides to continue working on it for another hour. The process is rather calm and relaxed, and as she is done with the dress, the Grand Couturier hangs it on the wall. Suddenly, something rolls down from the table next to her. It looks like a puppet fell down from it, but how? She grabs the puppet and investigates it.

"Why did you move...?" she wonders quiet, looking into the puppets eyes. Since she can't expect an answer, Nui simply puts the puppet back onto the table and lays down onto her bed, looking up at the ceiling of the room, thinking what to do next, since Lady Ragyo has no orders for her. But apparently, the puppet rolls down again. With a perplexed face expression, Nui stands up again and takes a closer look at the puppet. Nui moves her hand on the puppet's body to see if there is a loose stitch or anything while sitting down on her bed again. Just as she takes a closer look at it's eyes, the puppet looks back into Nui's eyes, and it even smiles. The fifteen year old girl smiles back. She carefully lays down the puppet on the other end of the bed and watches it jump to her. The view makes Nui chuckle. It gives her an idea too, as now, Nui draws a few small strings of Life Fibers out of her fingers, giving them to her little "me." The puppet starts playing with the string, making little funny movements with it, and then, it fuses with it. Just as Nui tries to pull up the puppet again, the puppet grows tall in a mere second.

"Oh wow..." Nui reacts surprised. She wasn't scares or shocked, but it was unexpected, to say the least.

"Hello, Miss Harime!" he second "me" smiles.

"He-llo..."

"I'm so happy that I get to know you personally now!" the puppet laughs happily.

"Uh, yeah, me too."

"You must feel lonely, otherwise you wouldn't have sewn me! Don't worry, humans are all stupid, but I am MUCH better! And as you know, the best friend you can have is yourself and family! Ah, wait, we don't have family,ahaha! Welp, THAT makes it easier for us!" the puppet continues. Nui nods very slowly.

"Yes... the best friend you can have... is yourself..." Nui quietly chanters to herself and looks up to the puppet again.

"We should make many more little Miss Harime's! You cannot imagine what great fun we are going to have! Imagine five of us! No, ten! Twenty! And they all are just like me! Or you! Haha, I love the thought! Haha!" and then, the puppet laughs happily. Its laugh is really genuine, delivering a warm and good feeling to everyone who listens to it.

It echoes through Nui's ears...

...

Late evening. The halls of the Nudist Beach HQ are pretty empty already. Nui takes a look into the mirror of her room, holding her eye patch in her right hand. Two puppets stand behind Nui and look at her with curious intention.

"Miss Harime, you are standing in front of this mirror for more than thirty minutes, so we decided to join you! Now you can admire yourself even more! What are you thinking about right now?!" one of the puppets ask.

"I'm thinking about Mama, lil Hoomaru, and REVOCS." Nui answers calm.

"Ooooooooooh. That sounds boring, Miss Harime!" the second puppet smiles. Nui puts her eye patch back onto a shelf and collects her two puppets, putting them back into the shelf as well. Interestingly, the puppets seem to make some kind of pyramid form, a bit like a card house. The upper three puppets on the peak even have different kinds of bowties on their heads - one in red, one in blue, and one in yellow. The others all have pink bowties. Nui smiles at her little creations and leaves her room to get some more popcorn before going to sleep. It's 11:10 PM already. Here and there, a Nudist Beach guard walks around, but other than that, it's pretty dead here. As Nui enters the canteen, she notices Ryuko with Senketsu, standing at the popcorn machine themselves. Ryuko notices Nui. Her small smile turns into an annoyed look.

"Nui." Ryuko reacts badly mooded and turns back to the machine.

"Oooooooooohh, Popcornfan, hm?" Nui grins happy. Ryuko doesn't react. Nui patiently waits and looks over Ryuko's shoulder. Her "friend" seems to fill up a small bag.

"What, that's nothing, Ryuko!" Nui reacts shocked.

"Yeah, cause the popcorn is mainly for you so that you leave us alone." Ryuko answers and grabs the last bits.

"Awwww, Ryuko, that is so kind of you and the other poopheads, BUT remember, we are..."

"Yeah?"

"... friends." Nui finishes. She wanted to say something else. But she doesn't dare to.

"Right. How about you just accept the fact you got all the popcorn for yourself and leave me alone? I feel bad for Hoomaru since she is the

only one you talk to, must be really depressing." Ryuko continues.

"Now, Ryuko, I might be mean, but that was a bit far now, don't you th... Ryuko?" Nui asks, as Ryuko suddenly stands still, as if she feels dizzy or anything.

"Hey, Life Fibers to Ryuko!" Nui says confused. Ryuko puts the bag on the machine and walks to a wall. Senketsu is worried.

"Uh, haha, that's not funny, Ryuko." Nui grins confused and looks into her eyes, and with that, her grin vanishes faster than an eye blink.

"Hey..." Nui mumbles worried, walking to the nearby sink to fill up a small cup of water for Ryuko. Ryuko starts coughin.

"What is going on? Your blood feels strange, it's as if... it would vanish." Senketsu reacts scared. He doesn't know either what to do. Nui quickly walks back to Ryuko and gives her the water while holding her. She even coughs blood on the ground, which causes Nui to jump back.

"Ew..." Nui reacts shocked. Ryuko tries to drink the water, and as she does it, she spits it out into the sink again, but it seems to help. Nui fills up a new cup of water and gives it to Ryuko as she tries to sit down again. Ryuko sighs after drinking the cup.

"I have no idea what this is all about..." Ryuko admits worried.

"You better take off this stupid Kamui already, you fool! It's gonna kill you!" Nui answers annoyed.

"Shut it."

"I'm trying to help you, dear! It will kill you if..."

"You're going to kill me too if you stand around any longer. Grab the stupid popcorn bag and go away already." Ryuko reacts ungrateful

towards Nui. The blond woman hesitates at first but then takes the popcorn bag. She looks back to Ryuko.

"Dude, go away!" Ryuko yells. Nui shakes her head annoyed and leaves the room.

"Senketsu... what is happening to me...?" she asks scared.

"I... don't know. Iori needs to investigate me again. If all of this started due to me, something is not right."

"... alright..." Ryuko sighs and stands up, wishing the blood away and then leaving the room...

The next day...

Keyboard sounds are audible. Nonon snores next to Houka. It's pretty soon - about 6 AM. Houka is focused on working on the security measures of the main manufacture in Nagoya. Satsuki visits the room.

"Satsuki?" Houka reacts interested. Satsuki should be sleeping.

"Houka." Satsuki answers, seemingly calm. But obviously, something bothers her, although Houka can't say what exactly.

"Up so soon?"

"I've slept worse than usual. Tell me, how does it look like with Nagoya?" Satsuki asks.

"Pretty well. I should be done with the system in a few minutes."

"Good. I want to destroy this facility today."

"You seem worried."

"I... am. This man... he is playing with my nerves."

"The director of Neo-REVOCS? Mhm... he does seem to be competent enough to annoy everyone, and he does it in a far more subtle but intelligent manner than his so called predecessor. I'm working on it as quick as I can."

"Thank you."

"Of course, Satsuki." Houka answers and continues working on his laptop.

Following up, Satsuki leaves the room again and walks back to the dormitories. There, she opens the door to Ryuko's room. Ryuko and Senketsu sleep. Satsuki watches Senketsu in distrust.

"... hrmpf..." Satsuki grumbles as she looks at Senketsu and then carefully closes the door again. Ichiro's revelation doesn't allow a single minute of peace for Satsuki. Hoomaru passes by Satsuki.

"Lady Satsuki?" Hoomaru asks curious.

"Oh, Hoomaru."

"You seem to be worried, what has happened?" Hoomaru asks. Satsuki takes a few seconds, but even then, she doesn't give an answer.

"You should sit down." Hoomaru suggests and sits down with Satsuki on a few chairs in the hall. Satsuki plays with her hands, thinks, appears worried...

"... I think Ryuko might die." Satsuki says quiet. Hoomaru nods slowly.

"... and the only way of saving her is to find a cure for this Life Fiber Sickness."

"I see."

"... there is one, as a matter of fact. But... it belongs this, this soulless being that is the director of Neo-REVOCS, and... I do not know how to achieve it. I hope we can find something interesting when we attack the main manufacture. Houka will search for data, while the others occupy and destroy the manufacture."

"I assume you hear it often enough, but rest assured, your sister is an remarkably strong personality - stubborn, no doubt about it, if not as stubborn as, let's say three or four years ago - but giving up is something she would never consider. If she'd knew she had to die, she would do everything to avoid it, as long as her enemy doesn't gain anything out of it. If that makes sense."

"I know..."

"Nui and I spoke about Ryuko. Even she is worried about Ryuko, she would of course never say that but she does care. As much as a psychopathic personality can care for someone else, that is. You and Nui should work together." Hoomaru suggests.

"Any other options?" Satsuki tries to avoid, as working with Nui is not exactly her number one idea she would accept.

"Alternativley, it might be worth taking a look at not stealing the cure itself, but instead the "recipe," the... blueprint, so to speak. If we cannot steal it, we could try to reproduce it. Mr. Inumuta and Mr. Iori might be able to work on it... even if it might be just a temporary solution."

"That is correct."

"There are enough ways to fulfill our goals, Miss Kiryuin. We can find one for Ryuko as well. Now, what is your plan?"

"I want to take on Nagoya... and hopefully find out something useful. Anything about the Sickness, or at least an idea about the director's plans. They must have something in common with the Sickness itself. I can't imagine healing a person from it without using Life

Fibers, and I want to find out how Harime is able to produce Life Fibers without something like a second primordial Life Fiber."

"I see. Everything will work out." Hoomaru continues. Satsuki and Hoomaru sit around a little more in the hall, until her boss yawns.

"You really should lay down and rest some more."

"Yes... you might be right." Satsuki answers and stands up.

"Thank you for hearing me out, Rei."

"Of course. Now get some sleep." Hoomaru finishes. Satsuki enters her room again and closes the door...

...

Red-orange Life Fibers on the walls sing once again. They crawl on the many walls of the throne room where the High Entity resides. Soft and silent steps are audible from the halls, left and right, where Life Fiber Beings can enter and leave the throne room whenever they wish to. Ichiro enters the room out of one of the halls and walks to the High Entity which looks down to him. Below them, more Life Fibers sing. The High Entity, better, it's copies stand up and walk down to Ichiro.

"High Entity." Ichiro says. The copies walk pass him and move to the edge behind them. Ichiro turns around and follows them. The throne room is incredibly huge. The director of Neo-REVOCS notices how the Entity copies look down from the edge. Millions of Life Fibers, living under the throne room, thirsty for hosts, and blood.

"Look at all of them..." one of the Entity says in an heavenly voice as Ichiro approaches them.

"Millions of us... seeking for a new home..."

"The academy is populated with ours."

"And it's good this way..." the Entity on his left mentions. He takes a look at it.

"You seem weak." he notes worried. The white light the copies and the Entity itself offers has weakened.

"Our... time is running away."

"Your fate shall be mine. Do not worry, for it will be over soon."

"We trust you on that..." the High Entity itself answers. Ichiro turns around.

"The humans plan on taking out the so called main manufacture. Hundreds and thousands of us are born there. I'll let them come. They will only find empty halls." Ichiro continues. The Entity copies fuse together on the throne.

"Your enemy can never be allowed of knowing your plans..."

"Of course, High Entity..."

...

Command center, 10 AM. The entire group around Satsuki and Ryuko met up in the central of the Nudist Beach HQ. Elite Four, Iori, Mikisugi, Tsumugu, Hoomaru and of course both sisters and Nui. Blueprints of the main manufacture of Nagoya are visible, and a 3D-Map of the building itself. Large halls are visible, storage rooms, the central room in the highest floor, connected next to a heli pad, Monorail connections, all these things could await the group. Behind the group, Nudist Beach members work on the preparations for the operation. Inumuta explains the situation.

"I've been looking forward to this. Following situation: The main manufacture is about 100 meter high and consists of about 20 floors with several basements and an underground parking lot. The security measures are under my control entirely and can be

deactivated at any point during the operation, however, I expect Neo-REVOCS to notice my attempts. Our main goal is to take down the facility and find out any useful information about the way they produce Life Fibers, if they produce them at all, and if they do not, we need to see if we can find other intel that benefits our operations. Mikisugi and Tsumugu carry explosive charges. I assume heavy resistance - Ashiaru, Samurai, and apparently one of the mysterious Couturiers will be waiting for us..." Inumuta starts to explain, while Satsuki makes a small hand sign, telling Ryuko to leave the room with her.

"What's up, Satsuki?" Ryuko asks.

"I wanted to make sure you are doing alright."

"Well, kind of, yeah, although I did feel pretty bad the last days, I even coughed blood... but Iori and I will speak about this and Senketsu, I'm sure we'll find a solution." Ryuko smiles confident. Satsuki nods and looks down to Senketsu who looks back to her.

"And you... Senketsu?"

"I'm alright. Well, I usually hang around." Senketsu reacts. Satsuki nods.

"This is going to be a large operation. You feel ready for it?" the big sister asks. Ryuko raises her eyebrows.

"Satsuki, I'll kick their asses just as much as the others in the group. I wonder if you are feeling ready though. Did something happen against this Doppelgänger clown?"

"... he pretty much only wasted my time. I should have known better." Satsuki lies. Ryuko rolls her eyes.

"Such a jerk."

"You don't say."

"Ready? Then go." Mikisugi says in the other room. The group leaves the command center and pass by Ryuko and Satsuki.

"Here we go." Ryuko mumbles.

The entire unit walks to the Arsenal of the Nudist Beach HQ to prepare their equipment. Ryuko got her scissor blades already, Satsuki sharpens her Katana and watches it shine up in blue briefly - probably thanks to the Life Fibers Junketsu left behind - and Nui fills her vest bags with ammo. Mikisugi and Tsumugu add explosive charges onto their belts. Since they cannot use the DTR for this operation, they rely on the sewing machine pistols Tsumugu used years ago already. These use desynchronizer ammo. Eventually, Iori takes a closer look at the uniforms of the Elite four. Sanageyama grabs a Katana for the battle, and Houka interestingly takes some kind of blue, small rifle, with many key pads, a display with an empty loading screen on the side and even an ammo counter. It seems to be part of the Impulse Regalia, ready to be materialized if the hacker wishes to. And finally, Hoomaru motivates Nui for the battle, but as expected, Nui just makes fun of everything and her former observant. The unit leaves the base, displaying three splinter groups as they walk to the helicopter near the Zeppelin: Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui on the front, then the Elite four with their uniforms and behind them, Mikisugi and Tsumugu as the last group. The groups enter the helicopter, and the doors close.

During the flight, Satsuki looks at Senketsu most of the time who is chatting with Ryuko. It's as if both live in an own world. Nui meanwhile is bored and plays with a few Life Fibers.

"Hey, I'd feel a tickle too if you hold a feather on my arm sleeves." he chuckles.

"For real?" Ryuko grins.

"Man, Matoi, all the time you spent with your Kamui, you got a crush on him?" Sanageyama asks curious and grins slightly. Ryuko laughs and then shakes her head.

"I mean I do love him but you know, it's like "Best friends" love."

"Ohhhhhh, damn bro, sorry to hear that, Senketsu." the Samurai reacts. Senketsu chuckles.

"I'm not worrying about that, Sanageyama. I prefer it more this way."

"Ah well then." he answers and looks to Houka who investigates his weapon.

"Interesting..." Houka quietly says to himself. There isn't even an ammo clip or anything, but somehow, the weapon is connected with the body of the person, or better, their uniform. Iori and Houka must have worked a lot together to sew this uniform, and maybe Nui had a fair share to it as well. Sanageyama then looks to Gamagoori who tests out the stability of his uniform by taking a Katana and cutting himself. Or at least, he tries to. And with that, Gamagoori nods satisfied. Nonon in the meantime counts her musician clones, and then, the Samurai takes a look at his own uniform. Typically green for Sanageyama, with small armored plates here and there, but this is his civil uniform still. It does look impressive already however. Iori surely had an idea for the four deva.

"Helicopter... honestly I sometimes ask myself when I don't have to see them from the inside again." Mikisugi mumbles. Nui listens.

"Ohhhhhh, they aren't THAT bad. Our old REVOCS helicopters were great! You ever got captured by one of us?"

"No."

"Well you missed some great fun out then! The pilots of my helicopter were clones themselves and I even had a sweet workbench there!" Nui smiles. Mikisugi raises his eye brows.

"You can sew there? I couldn't concentrate if it's so loud." he asks.

"Hah, only if you are an expert but you know..."

"I know, I'm dumb and you are ten times better than me."

"Ten times might be a bit much, after all, you guys won our little game, not me." Nui answers smiling.

"You let REVOCS defeat sound like a little game of friendship."

"Ain't everything a game? When we play, we gotta play high, otherwise, there wouldn't be any fun! But hey, I'm not angry at you guys, I really am not. Well, I'm a bit annoyed but angry? Me?!"

"You're not angry at us?" he asks surprised.

"Nopey nopey nopey! My name's not Ryuko after all, haha!" Nui laughs. Even Tsumugu listens interested as he hears that. You'd expect from someone like Nui to be something like a bad loser, especially when she is around the people that defeated her.

"You know, guys, you guys aren't that bad. Don't get me wrong, you all are stupid EXCEPT for Ryuko and Satsuki, they are genuinely cool but you guys? Really, everyone of you needs some appealing clothes, so you can be glad you guys have me around. And I like that you are all more talkative then my Life Fiber douchebags."

"Are they all as kind as you are?" Sanageyama asks.

"They are! But you won't understand them because they just sing. I can understand them, but human language is more interesting and fun to talk."

"You communicate via singing?" Houka asks interested.

"Pretty much. A few can talk in human languages too, like me or my Doppelgänger, other than that... yup, everyone's stupid."

"Interesting... communicating via singing is unusual but not uncommon." Houka answers interested, and just as he is about to ask more, a loudspeaker rings up.

"Destination arrival in five minutes..."

...

A short time later...

...

A sewer hatch opens. Mikisugi and Tsumugu climb out of it and take off their jackets.

"Man... who would have thought an industrial city could produce such amounts of junk?" Mikisugi asks his friend. Both men arrived in a little locker room which is connected to the sewers to make sure nothing highly poisonous or important swim through it. Other than that, the room itself is rather empty. Brown metal walls are everywhere. The men open the door and take a look around. Above them, they can hear machines working.

"Alright. We'll place the charges in the machine rooms and meet up with Satsuki's friends." Mikisugi suggests. Tsumugu unlocks his weapon, just like Mikisugi. After that, both men walk through the halls and take a look around. It's worryingly quiet here. All you can hear are the machines and a few steps here and there, but for such a huge factory, you'd expect more than... this. As they walk around the corner, they find some kind of security gate which has frames on the walls around it, with small holes on them - probably lasers that will trigger the alarm if someone walks through them without the correct clearance level. However, both men have to get pass the gate.

"I suppose we have to wait." Tsumugu suggests. Mikisugi nods and scans the area.

"I kind of missed this, Tsumugu. Remember when we didn't had all the good tech like the DTR?"

"Yeah. Infiltrating small REVOCS factories to make their days worse."

"It was an enjoyable time. This kind of feels like the old times again." Mikisugi smiles slightly in nostalgia.

"That precision shot I landed, with you as my spotter... I won't forget that. Stood on top of a REVOCS skyscraper and you perfectly told me when to shoot the oil tank. One milisecond later and the bullet would have hit the gate and not the tank."

"The factory was burning like hell." Mikisugi adds. Tsumugu nods satisfied...

...

"So like... was this really the best idea you could come up with, Inu?" Nonon asks annoyed as she tries to take a look around. She and her three companions all are in a pretty tight transporter of Neo-REVOCS. Nudist Beach stole it a while ago. Houka is looking at a display on his arm which shows a camera on the drivers seat. Houka hacked into the system of an Ashigaru soldier. Both Houka and Nonon have their regalia activated - Impulse Regalia and Valkyrie Regalia.

"Dude, can you move a bit?" Sanageyama asks Nonon.

"Said the guy with the fat sword and armor." Nonon reacts.

"Quiet, both of you." Gamagoori orders. Gamagoori has the, well, largest problem out of all the four... after all, he barely fits into it. The transporter stops a few minutes later, and with that, Houka orders the Ashigaru to open up the transporter door. No one is in the underground parking lot. The group leaves the transporter. Sanageyama and Nonon breathe for some air, while Houka ignores them and Gamagoori shakes his head. Houka smiles mischievous.

"Hm, works well." he grins as he moves the Ashigaru around while holding certain buttons on the keyboard. He controls the Ashigaru by using one of his arms. It's certainly interesting to watch. Houka deactivates the Ashigaru. The group walks through the parking lot.

As they open up a door, they find two Ashigaru's that didn't noticed their presence. Gamagoori quickly grabs them with his two large hands and crushes them. The four deva continue their infiltration. Interestingly, the general appearance of the walls and rooms are completely different than what Mikisugi and Tsumugu saw, as here the halls are clean, if cold. Gamagoori looks around and thinks.

"These Fiber Factories are in the tenth floor. We'll investigate them, collect anything that looks useful and leave the facility. Uzu, Nonon, we are going to protect Houka as long as we need to!" Gamagoori orders. Nonon holds her bag with the musician clones ready and Sanageyama keeps the sword grip tight. Houka walks interested through the manufacture, holding one of his arms up. As they reach the door to the entrance hall, Houka carefully opens it and takes a look. Only a few employees and Ashigaru are there. This makes Houka suspicious about the entire situation.

"Hm... there aren't many people in the entrance hall. I would expect from such a huge facility to have more people around there." he comments quietly and grabs the rifle that is on his back. It boots up, visible by a few lights on it, and as it is booted up, he holds it tight and ready. Then he opens the door carefully again and aims on the ceiling of the room. All that peeks out of the door is the muzzle, and as he shoots once - with the weapon being silenced - a small little electronic device lands on the corner of the ceiling. With that done, Houka puts the weapon away and raises his arm up to his chest, revealing a few symbols on it. There is a power symbol on it, or a robot being electrocuted, to name two of them. Houka presses the power symbol, and suddenly, a sound rings up briefly. A sound you'd usually hear if the power runs out. The hacker opens the door again. All Ashigaru's in the room have been deactivated.

"Impulse Regalia, Ladies and Gentlemen." Houka explains with a mischievous tone. As the group enters the room, it seems like the employees don't seem to care too much about what the four are doing.

"Oh look, Couturiers." one of the employees even notice. Sanageyama reacts impressed. His green uniform and Gamagooris brown, with flexible plate armor covered uniform seem to gain the most attention. Eventually, Houka deactivates with the keyboards on his body the cameras in the facility while they enter an elevator that leads up to the Fiber factories.

"Well, they are blind now, but not for long. The security administrator will notice my hacking attempts soon." the hacker comments.

"Then we should move." Gamagoori answers.

In the upper halls, Ashigaru walk their patrol routes. Two of them visit a balcony which serves as resting area for employees. From here, there is a good view onto Nagoya. The Ashigaru are in the seventeenth floor. There is also a huge and impressive Neo-REVOCS corporate HQ which appears to be the largest building in the entire city. As the Ashigaru take a look around, hands suddenly pack them, and they are thrown off the balcony. Ryuko climbs up thanks to Senketsu Azami which allows her to walk on walls . Then, Satsuki in her Wrath Regalia climbs up and eventually, Satsuki helps Nui getting onto the balcony as well. The three women take out their weapons.

"I still believe this wall climbing felt like doing a fun spying mission." Nui mentions smiling.

"That way you don't raise the alarm." Satsuki answers.

"Surely not attention gaining if you walk on the walls of a huge factory." Nui chuckles sarcastic.

"Come on, let's go." says Ryuko and opens the door. Rest rooms are in this floor, and they seem to be large. Nui steps forward.

"Follow me, I know this building. Overseer office, here I come!" Nui laughs happy, holding her weapon with a sadistic intention. Ryuko and Satsuki follow her. The cameras are deactivated as the three

can notice - they don't move anymore and the red lights are off as well. A Samurai appears around the corner, however, Ryuko is able to knock him out with the scissor blades before he is able to raise any alarm or suspicion. Nui pats his head twice and the group continues. There is an elevator guarded by a group of Ashigaru. Security gates seem to be there as well, but fortunately, they are deactivated as well thanks to Houka. Without controlling the security measures, the entire operation would have become far harder to perform, so it was a good idea to send Nui to Neo-REVOCS. Not raising the alarm as long as possible is essential.

"So now what?" Ryuko asks. Satsuki carefully walks forward. Four guards are in the elevator room. She quickly walks back to her companions.

"Four of them." Satsuki mentions. Nui suddenly walks forward and throws out a few clones to the guards. Using quick slash attacks with their needle blades, the clones easily take down the Ashigaru. After that, the clones shrink again. Nui quickly collects them and turns to her friends with closed eyes and a big smile that gets even bigger.

"Mhmmhmmh..." Nui chuckles. Ryuko and Satsuki walk into the elevator, Nui follows them. Slowly, the elevator makes its way up to the 20th floor of the building. If there wouldn't be so many watchtowers on the roof, they would have just climbed their way up to it entirely.

"That was easy." Ryuko mentions and leans back.

"We should still stay careful." Senketsu continues.

"And you can 100% assure me that we could find out where Neo-REVOCS gets its materials in the overseer office?" Satsuki asks Nui.

"Oui, mon cher. And if not, your weird friends will find something probably." Nui answers. The elevator door opens and the three women arrive in a rather empty, red colored hall which appears

completely contrary to the rest of the facility. The facility is built and constructed rather irritating as well, but you'd probably get used to it if you work here. Nui looks around confused.

"They colored everything new!" Nui notices surprised.

"I've been here once, but this is definitely not how I remember the building. Office's have been here once." Satsuki mentions. Ryuko however doesn't care and moves forward.

Mikisugi and Tsumugu in the meantime advanced through the facility, while Houka continues to take out the security. As they meet a Samurai, Tsumugu grabs him while he doesn't look, removes his armor and eventually knocks him out with Mikisugi's help. Meanwhile, the men have arrived in the floor with the machine rooms.

"There's one thing I strongly dislike about this entire location." Mikisugi mentions suspicious as he peeks around a corner.

"The bad air?"

"That too."

"The ugly rooms?"

"That not."

"But?"

"No one is here. Tsumugu, I fear they knew we were coming."

"We shouldn't have included Matoi in the first place."

"Then she would start rebelling and cause trouble, and you know how this young woman can be if she is angry."

"Mhm... I won't sacrifice an operation due to the moods of a young woman. We need to talk about this with Satsuki."

"Indeed..."

Masaru in the meantime sits in the office of Neo-REVOCS and slowly starts to get messages from various security administrators about cameras suffering from malfunctions.

"Interesting. Director Harime was right." Masaru reacts interested and seems to order units to the manufacture. He is aware that he does not have access to the cameras anymore, but apparently, he seems to be very calm about that. At the same moment, Houka and the others walk through the facility and reach the Fiber factories in which they assume heavy resistance.

"Such deserted rooms." Gamagoori mumbles.

"As if no one would have been here for weeks." Sanageyama adds. The group arrives at the hall gates. Nonon carefully opens the door and peeks - there is a large, rather empty hall, with a podest in the center of it, and capsules on the left and right side as well as a few workbenches with sewing machines... but there is not a single employee or a guard.

"Huh?" Nonon reacts and opens the door. No one is there. Lights hang on the ceiling. The four deva move into the room and take a look around, with Houka going to the capsules and scanning them with his uniform.

"Investigate the area." orders Gamagoori ambitious and takes a look at the capsules. Houka analyses the capsules with a mask he just put on.

"Interesting... there is a difference in the heat that comes out from the capsules. Hours before, something seemed to be inside them. Life Fibers?" he wonders and starts working...

Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui meanwhile approach a huge red door.

"Keep your weapons ready." Satsuki orders quietly and carefully opens the door. This is the overseer's office, and it's highly modernized. Monitors everywhere, a large window wall with a desk and chair in front of it from where you get a great look at the city of Nagoya itself. Constructions seem to be going on next to the manufacture, as there is a crane near the roof.

"Dude is this some kind of joke or why is this store so badly guarded?" Ryuko asks loud. The chair turns around, Ichiro is revealed. He smiles at the three and holds his hands.

"Welcome to the main manufacture, my dears." he greets happily and stands up.

"Who else than him..." Senketsu mumbles. Ryuko keeps her scissor blades ready, Nui aims at Ichiro, and Satsuki holds the Katana grip tight.

"So passive-aggressive... what leads you into this facility? Is it Life Fibers?" he asks Nui.

"Is it hate?" he then asks Ryuko.

"Is it fear?" Ichiro finally asks Satsuki and looks into her eyes with a burning look.

"We're going to take down this weird facility and while we are at it, we'll kick your ass real good too." Ryuko grins and aims the scissor blades at him.

"Ah... the scissor blades. Useful tools, no doubt about that, your father did good when he developed them. Not that I would admire him, after all, he was a mere human, yet what is it you always say? Honor to whom honor is due?"

"So you've been waiting for us, right?" Senketsu asks Ichiro.

"Senketsu, we've never truly met each other, I am disappointed. The High Entity spoke a lot about you. My dear Nui is already very "beloved," but you, my friend, you probably are even worse than her and yet, she got sent into the absolute emptiness and not you. Kinda funny if you think about it. That makes you a monster."

"Senketsu ain't a monster, you..."

"Calm down, Ryuko. The pleasure is all mine then." Senketsu answers ironic. Ichiro chuckles briefly and looks at all the three.

"Hm, I bet it is. Now, you surely are not here because you want to talk with me and stand around, and I understand that..." Ichiro continues and presses a button that raises the alarm in the building.

"... which is why we can just keep it simple, if you don't mind." the Director then chuckles and destroys the furniture with Life Fibers in front of him, walking towards his three opponents.

"I'm not a huge fan of combat, I do prefer mind games unlike my predecessor, but of course I am not unarmed. Let me introduce you my trusty weapon of choice..." he grins and materializes Life Fibers as he walks towards the women. The Life Fibers form into a weapon - a large scythe with two grips. It is completely black, yet Life Fibers move inside it. It shines however. He clicks two times with the scythe onto the ground. It appears powerful, the women can sense that by the sheer aura the weapon spreads.

HOLY TOOL OF THE ENFORCER - HARVESTER SCYTHE

"Humans are not worthless, they never have been in the first place. Humans are a resource worth to be collected, and the Life Fibers will feast on them. Let's see if you can survive this." he grins and attacks Nui with lightning speed. Nui jumps back, Satsuki draws her Katana and counters the attack, then, Ichiro turns into Life Fibers and crawls under Satsuki, materializes back and hits her back with more Life Fibers. Ryuko attacks Ichiro with the scissor blades, yet he is able to block the attack with the scythe almost effortlessly...

Since the alarm in the manufacture has been raised, the four deva, Mikisugi and Tsumugu stay careful. Nonon shakes her head as the red lights go on.

"Great work, Inu." Nonon grins mischievous.

"The alarm has been activated manually. They found one of us." Houka notices.

"Oh, great, we're getting company." Nonon then comments as the doors open and a person in a red, impressive robe appears. The face cannot be seen. The four deva watch it come closer to them. Sanageyama keeps his Katana ready and activates his uniform.

LIGHTNING REGALIA

The combat variant of the Lightning Regalia appears as a impressive yet flexible Samurai armor with green colors, very fine armor plates that provide flexibility and speed, and the arms even shine, as green lights flicker through it. Eventually, Gamagoori does the same and activates his uniform.

PROTECTOR REGALIA

In his Protector Regalia, the giant man appears like a bastion. That is all you can really say. It is not properly describable how strong and fearful this uniform appears. Orange colors, large armored gloves, a skin tight armor that absorbs damage and lets the user feel the pain, but equally enhances his capabilities - it's practical use reminds a lot of the Shackle Regalia years ago. Next to him and Sanageyama, Nonon activates her Valkyria Regalia and Houka his Impulse Regalia.

"Usurpers who aim on interfering in our holy mission will experience suffering! Suffering, brought by the Life Fibers should you humans not yield!" the Couturier yells in front of the four deva. Dozens of Samurai and Ashigaru appear now as well. They must have waited until the alarm would raise. More and more henchmen of Neo-

REVOCS appear until they made a half circle around the four heroes.

"More than hundred Ashigaru and Samurai." Houka analyzes with his mask.

"Sounds good." Sanageyama says satisfied as he looks at the Samurai.

"Keep the fun out of this, Sanageyama, these men are stronger and more disciplined than REVOCS' COVERS." Gamagoori reacts. The eyes of the Couturier shine in red suddenly, and Life Fibers leave it's robe. Nonon raises her eye brows and throws the musician clones who start to play music. Followed up by that, Neo-REVOCS charges an attack. Mikisugi and Tsumugu can hear the shots and battle sounds and decide to make their way up to the Fiber factories, as the machine rooms are on the way to it. With a helicopter, the group should be able to escape later on..

Satsuki and Ryuko meanwhile fight against Ichiro who seems to block and counter every last attack of the women effortlessly, while Nui tries to walk around to hit him with a bullet. As she shoots a bullet, he turns into Life Fibers again just to materialize one second later again, causing the shot to miss. Nui's devils masks in her eyes turn angry.

"You are so annoying!" Nui yells. Ichiro suddenly grabs Ryuko with Life Fibers and throws her against the monitors to get rid of her for a brief moment. The Director then approaches Satsuki. His weapon is almost as large as he is, and he does have a formidable tallness with 6,1 feet.

"You seem nervous, Kiryuin, as if a live would depend on this fight." he grins as he looks into Satsuki's eyes. Satsuki parries the scythe attack he commenced and then hits Ichiro's cheek, with blood leaving it, and Life Fibers becoming visible.

"How is it possible a pure Life Fiber has human properties?!" Satsuki asks as she blocks the next attack.

"The High Entity and we learned, Kiryuin, we do not need such pesky things as a "womb" to create new individuals!" Ichiro reacts and commences an overhead attack which Satsuki dodges, and then, Ryuko appears and slams Ichiro out of the building with the scissor blades. He lands however safely on the roof of the main manufacture, near the helipad. Nui fires at Ichiro who dodges the attacks perpetually, and the last shot in Nui's magazine is even reflected by a Life Fiber wall he summoned. The bullet almost hits Nui. Ryuko and Satsuki jump out and confront the Director once again with Nui staying a few meters back to give range support.

Ventilation systems, transmission masts, chests, a helipad, and several more goods are on the rooftop. The sky is clear. Ichiro keeps his scythe behind his back, ready for an attack however, and smiles at both sisters. Nui climbs onto a watchtower where she has a good vision on her Doppelgänger.

"Finally this world is getting exciting! You have no idea how boring it can be to just sit in an office and watch a group of inferior idiots travel through a world not worth living in!" the Doppelgänger states.

"Oh shut up already!" Ryuko yells and attacks together with Satsuki, however, Ichiro blocks once more with his scythe easily and then attacks Ryuko, all while grabbing Satsuki with Life Fibers he summoned, incapacitating her briefly. Nui fires at Ichiro who dodges again. Ichiro's sheer strength with the weapon is well transmitted, as Ryuko struggles to block every single attack he performs. Ryuko loses her balance and walks a few steps back. The director uses the opportunity to hit Ryuko by ramming his scythe into her shoulder. Ryuko screams in agony. Ichiro then pulls the weapon out again, blood leaves her shoulder. Even Senketsu felt the pain.

"AH SHIT!" Ryuko screams.

"This weapon... I can't feel the fibers anymore! Ryuko! I believe his weapon can kill Life Fibers!" Senketsu comments.

"What!? Are you kidding me!?"

"Your Kamui is intelligent, indeed, Matoi!" Ichiro smiles and touches his finger on the sharp tip of the scythe. Blood leaves the finger which he then shows Ryuko.

"Oh no... one bad mistake and you could die a horrible death." he mentions evil with large eyes and a bright smile.

"You..." Ryuko tries to answer as Nui suddenly appears from behind, jumping onto Ichiro and ramming her weapon into his heart which however doesn't deal much damage, as Nui's rifle blade cannot sever Life Fibers. Nui then decides to take a few steps back and to shoot Ichiro's legs. To her negative surprise, Ichiro doesn't care about that and grabs Nui, slams her against a wall, then throws Life Fibers to tie her up and eventually commences an overhead attack to execute Nui.

"Time to die, sweetheart!" he laughs and attacks. Nui's face expression instantly turns into absolute fear and panic as the weapon comes closer.

"RYUKO HELP ME PLEASE!" she screams scared. Ryuko saves her fathers murdered by slamming the scissor blades under the scythe. Both weapons are almost in Nui's eyes, and the end of the scythe is almost in one of Nui's eyes. She is paralyzed by this view.

"The only person that is allowed to kick Nui's ass is me, you bastard, so leave her alone." Ryuko threatens calm and kicks Ichiro away. Satsuki frees herself and rams her Katana into Ichiro's back, however, he grabs the Katana from his torso and throws it away. As Satsuki watches her Katana flying away, she see's an incoming needle copter approaching their position, probably sent by Masaru himself or lured by the alarm. Nui see's it too.

"... oh no..." she mumbles, still scared and paralyzed. Satsuki grabs Nui.

"Get yourself together, Harime, I need you!" Satsuki orders Nui who then nods hesitant while Ryuko and Ichiro talk to each other in the background.

"So what is your plan, huh? Wanna cover this world into some kind of dress like your weird clone?"

"Aha, no. Who am I, an idiot?" he asks sarcastic and attacks Ryuko again.

"I've won the moment you met Senketsu, you silly little girl!"

"More like, you don't want to admit you're busted, right!?" Ryuko grins. Ichiro shakes his head and chuckles.

"How stubborn you still are." he mumbles and slams Ryuko with the dull side of the scythe away, causing her to clash into the crane a few meters away from them. As Ryuko stands up, she stands on the crane, with Ichiro approaching her on it. Satsuki and Nui try to follow them, however, the needle copter interrupts the attempt and opens fire. One wrong step on the crane would mean a long fall, and so, Ryuko has to be very careful...

Mikisugi and Tsumugu fight their way through the facility after planting the explosives in the machine rooms. The explosion power should be strong enough to render the entire building useless. As they reach the hall in which the four deva fight in, they see how Sanageyama takes on one Samurai after another easily, Nonon playing music with her Nui musician clones, Gamagoori absorbing the damage and Houka trying to analyze and gain information as much as he can, and you can really see it as he is stressed. The Couturier on the opposing side however keeps on fighting and endures, even if Gamagoori hits him with his large fists and the whip he still uses. Mikisugi and Tsumugu join the battle.

"So you're making party without us?" Mikisugi asks Houka.

"A great source of data. While the others fight off the units, I can easily find out more about the production here... and it looks like they seem to produce Life Fibers here, but how?" he asks himself and continues analyzing fascinated. A Samurai charges at him, yet Mikisugi and Tsumugu fire a load of desynchronizer rounds into him, causing him to become naked. Sanageyama notices Life Fibers that crawl through the ground, until they grab Nonon and Tsumugu. Both of them are slammed away and are tied up by the Life Fibers.

"I hate this..." Tsumugu mentions annoyed, while Nonon tries everything she can to get out of her misere. More Ashigaru and Samurai appear.

Bullets in the meantime destroy Nui's and Satsuki's cover.

"I hate these needle copters." Satsuki reacts and peeks out of the cover. The needle copter stops firing, Nui shoots at it. Ryuko and Ichiro however face off each other on the crane. Senketsu's material moves due to the wind, just like her hair. Both opponents have just enough room to stand safely on it. Ichiro chuckles and leans onto his scythe in front of him.

"Resistance is always welcome, Mato! However, you are not giving up so quick, do you?" he asks.

"Oh shut it, dude! You'll be wondering once these scissor blades cut you in pieces!" Ryuko reacts and attacks Ichiro with overhead attacks which he easily parries once again. Ichiro then commences an attack himself by swinging the weapon from the left, no, he actually fakes it, suddenly turns the weapon to the other side and attacks from right! Ryuko is confused by that and is almost hit by him. Her shoulder still hurts.

"The Director is cheeky..." Senketsu mumbles.

"He is, yeah. Let's see if he can react to this!" Ryuko smiles confident and attacks randomly with quick slash attacks. These attacks take her stamina away and yet it's not worth it, Ichiro still blocks the attacks. He laughs by the look of Ryuko being annoyed by him.

"I know your combat style. Your "crazy" attempts to hurt me even in the slightest way all lead to nothing!" Ichiro reacts and attacks with the scythe again. Ryuko dodges and falls back. As she tries to parry an attack, she fails the attempt due to the sheer strength of the scythe which actually looks as light as a feather, and yet the power behind it is hardly to comprehend.

"The Life Fibers that live inside this weapon hate you more than anything in this universe! Their wrath manifests in the very scythe that will cut you in half if you do not surrender!" he yells to Ryuko. Ryuko bites her teeth together.

"He might be powerful... but even this psychopath needs to have a weak point!" Senketsu thinks loud.

"Then we'll fin... WOAH!" Ryuko screams as Life Fibers suddenly try to Jump onto Ryuko. They miss however and crawl behind Ryuko. Ryuko turns around and kicks them away, Ichiro attacks, Ryuko dodges, and with one of the scissor blades, she can cut off one of Ichiro's arms. His hand regenerates almost instantly however. Ryuko stands right in front of the crane tower. No escape.

"I got you eventually. I wonder how much pain you can endure."

"Grr..." Ryuko grumbles and thinks. Senketsu takes a look around. The needle copter still supresses Nui and Satsuki, with the first one trying to pull a few hits with her rifle, but as Nui gets shot, Satsuki needs to search quickly for a new cover. Without Nui, she can't try to hijack the helicopter.

"Satsuki is in danger..." Senketsu comments worried. Ryuko looks to Satsuki. Her cover is blowing away with each second Ryuko

hesitates, and without Nui, she might get killed.

"Give me the scissor blades and surrender. Then, the needle copter will stop firing." Ichiro smiles happy about his seemingly safe victory. Ryuko then looks at Ichiro with a sinister grin.

"In your dreams." Ryuko grins, suddenly turns around and attacks the crane itself with the scissor blades which is split into halves. Ichiro raises his eye brows, yet not for long, as now the crane starts falling apart, and the part they are on is falling directly onto the needle copter which is pretty much pierced by the crane. Ryuko holds onto the falling crane, just like Ichiro who's hold is however less safe than Ryuko's. The crane rams into the several floors of the facility, debris fall, smoke rises up, and then, the crane slams into the Couturier the four deva were fighting against. Ryuko waves at the four deva and Mikisugi who are completely shocked by the view.

"RYUKO, HOW DO YOU ALWAYS COME UP WITH THIS!?"

Senketsu screams surprised. Ryuko climbs on the crane while it flies through the building, advancing the scissor blades as Ichiro tries to hold on with his scythe. As the crane slams into the machine room, the explosive charges blow up, causing several heavy explosions, obliterating the needle copter, the Couturier and Ichiro himself. Ichiro uses however the momentum to attack Ryuko inside the crane as he falls onto her, attacking with his scythe, but he realizes too late Ryuko was just waiting for this very move!

"Oh well." he embraces and then, Ryuko closes the scissor blades while he is between them, cutting him into two halves! The following explosion blows both of them into the upper floors again. The four deva, Mikisugi and Tsumugu in the meantime are trying to escape even though Houka resists as he desperately seeks for more data. Nonon forces him out of the room however...

Ryuko coughs and takes a look around. Since the machine rooms exploded, a large fire has spread out in this short time, and smoke rises up, but thanks to Ryuko's Life Fiber body, she can endure smoke and fire better than humans. As she walks through the

burning room, she see's the dead Ichiro, split apart into two parts, both hanging on the crane, and the scythe lying on the ground. He's been split vertically, meaning his face is split into two parts as well, and both parts look at Ryuko, dead, and cold.

"Welcome to earth, you clown." Ryuko says cold and turns around, holding her scissor blades safely. As she opens a door, she finds herself back in a large hall which appears to be a stitching hall.

"I hate fire." Ryuko mumbles and pulls away some of the debris. The young woman tries to orientate.

"Man, can you see anything in this smoke, Senketsu?"

"Hardly. But we've been here when we first entered the building, the balcony must be here somewhere." Senketsu thinks.

"You could be right. We gotta get up to the roof however and find Satsuki and Nui."

"Maybe you can climb up the crane?"

"Might be worth a shot." Ryuko answers and turns around.

Ichiro stands there again, trimming his bowtie.

"Really, Matoi, you can't just kill me with these little things." he says.

"Are you kidding me?!" Ryuko reacts shocked.

"The Fibers of the High Entity live inside me! You can't kill me!" he laughs and rams the scythe into the ground, destroying the ground. Ryuko jumps up and wallruns pass Ichiro.

"Ah shit!"

"Well this makes everything harder, especially here! We should run!"

"We definitely should!" Ryuko reacts and runs through the hall, with Ichiro following her patient. Ryuko kicks open a door, jumps over debris, runs through fire, slides under destroyed walls, yet her escape attempt ends quickly as she finds a dead end. Ryuko turns around and see's Ichiro moving his finger to the left and right.

"End of the line, Matoi." he chuckles and slams the scissor blades away. Ichiro attacks with his scythe. As he is about to hit Ryuko, Senketsu's eye shines, and suddenly, Ryuko turns into Life Fibers herself, avoiding the scythe attack entirely! She materializes instantly again.

"This Kamui is MARVELOUS!" Ichiro laughs proud about his creation. A shot rings out, a hole appears in Ichiro's heart area, letting him fall onto the ground. Nui sneaked up on Ichiro.

"Come on, darling!" Nui yells at Ryuko.

"Yeah, alright!" she reacts, grabs her scissor blades and follows Nui through the halls until they arrive at the balcony where Satsuki is waiting for them.

"Let's jump, this is fun!" Nui suggests and jumps off the balcony. Satsuki and Ryuko jump down as well. Nui pulls out her parasol to glide down safely, Satsuki uses her grappling hook to fly through the air, and Ryuko first holds on Nui's boots, then jumps to Satsuki, until she and Satsuki both land safely. Nui follows them briefly after.

"Gosh, Ryuko, I'm so happy for you! You can even turn into Life Fibers yourself thanks to your weird Kamui!" Nui laughs happy. Ryuko doesn't know how to react.

"Why are you looking like that!? That means that YOU can move through EVERYTHING you want! Yes, that's right, you can even watch the girls and boys take a shower! I'm envious!"

"Yeah, yeah, alright, thanks, Nui, I don't care." Ryuko answers. Nui chuckles. Satsuki watches the Nudist Beach helicopter arriving at the

main manufacture, and Neo-REVOCS units approaching their position. Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui fight through the streets by moving from cover to cover as Masaru dispatched several Ashigaru units with range weapons, but they can easily get past them and arrive at the helicopter where the four deva as well as Mikisugi and Tsumugu are in. The manufacture burns down as the group leaves the city.

Ichiro leaves the burning manufacture briefly after and watches the helicopter fly away. Burns are on his body here and there, and his clothes got damaged too. He's annoyed by the Neo-REVOCS units around him that don't know what to do next.

"I'll make sure you surrender... you wouldn't want your friend Mankanshoku to be hurt, would you...?"

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Later, around evening...

Satsuki and Ryuko sit on the surface of the island in a small resting area. It's 9:40 PM already. A few guards walk around, but other than that, it's rather calm, and some snow falls from the sky. Both have a cup of hot chocolate on the table they sit next to. Satsuki notices Ryuko thinking. Senketsu is half asleep but listens.

"What are you thinking about, Ryuko?" Satsuki asks curious.

"I... I've been kinda asking myself if we can continue our annual tradition around winter, you know?"

"We will, yes. Don't worry about it."

"I couldn't kill him. I can't explain why, I couldn't, it didn't worked. It wouldn't have been over maybe but... man, I was so close."

"Like I said, don't worry too much."

"Mhm."

"And once we did it, we both will get ourselves cotton candy, like every year. Although I admit I'm looking forward to the theatre visit the most." Satsuki smiles. Ryuko nods.

"Sounds fun." Senketsu mentions and listens up carefully.

"It is. I usually save my holidays for winter so me and Satsuki can do some cool stuff together. It just kinda has some sort of special atmosphere to it, the winter, I mean. You get out with your friends, or your family, you get something nice to eat, watch a movie at home while it's snowing outside, or you have fun shopping. That's stuff we do every year."

"It does sound enjoyable indeed." Senketsu answers. Satsuki drinks some of her chocolate, just like Ryuko.

"Mako and me never did that sadly."

"I see. I'm sorry to hear that."

"Eh, it's okay. Once Ichiro is gone, I won't care about what happened, I'll straight up visit Mako and tell her that I missed her."

"What exactly did happen?"

"I don't want to talk about it, but... to put it very short, there was a heavy misunderstanding due to this stupid sickness, that's why... why the people decided to banish me from the village."

"Oh man..."

"But we did had a lot of fun together at least. We often visited Kumano for example. You can walk next to the cliffs and get a great look at the ocean. And whenever we came back, we made photos of

the landscape and pinned them in our rooms. Honestly, I'm glad Mako doesn't know anything about all of this."

"She'd get worried if she does." Senketsu answers.

"Yeah." Ryuko reacts. Satsuki watches Senketsu again.

"Oh, Ryuko, about this manga... you happen to have it?" Satsuki asks.

"I do, yeah, I just arrived at the part I stopped last time."

"That's nice... I'd like to read it when you are done."

"Sure." Ryuko smiles. Satsuki yawns.

"I'm tired. We should go down again." Satsuki suggests and empties the chocolate. Ryuko does the same and then, both women stand up and walk pass the Zeppelin that is under construction. It looks pretty solid already and probably could be used, not for battles, since there aren't any weapons yet, but it seems like the important things are working already. As they arrive in the main hall again, they find Nonon practicing some music with her musician clones, while Nui, Iori, Gamagoori and Mikisugi listen to them. Gamagoori and Mikisugi are interested and enjoy hearing the nice and clean music the clones make, while Iori is just watching and Nui is bored, with her head leaned forward and her hands under her chin. Seems like the practice play is almost over though. Mikisugi and Gamagoori clap, Iori nods, Nui just looks at the others perplexed.

"Can anyone explain to me what was so great about this? It was just music." Nui mentions with a confused grin.

"Just music!? Your clones are excellent! I love working with them!" Nonon yells back.

"Clones!? Music?! Excellent!? ME?!"

"Yup! Hah, looks like you can also learn to play some proper music!" Nonon laughs. Nui doesn't know exactly how to react about that. Whenever she got a compliment, it was by Lady Ragyo, and only her.

"Uh, thank you, I believe?" Nui asks.

"When someone compliments you, Harime, accept it. No one is trying to fool you." Iori suggests. She simply nods slowly. Nui looks at Ryuko and Satsuki who walk pass them. The Grand Couturier is about to say something just as Ryuko looks at her, visible on her mouth opening up for a brief moment, but apparently, Nui hesitates. Eventually, she just doesn't say anything and plays with her hands while smiling. Ryuko and Satsuki enter the dormitories.

"I believe Nui wanted to say thank you." Satsuki says.

"For what?"

"Because you saved her life. When you did this crane move, she told me she doesn't know how to react to you saving her."

"..."

"Why did you do that, if I may ask?" Satsuki asks careful.

"... I rather kill her myself, that's all."

"You seem hesitant though."

"I'm not."

"Don't lie on me."

"Satsuki, can we not talk about this now? I do not wish to talk about Nui." Ryuko pleads. Satsuki hesitates a second or two, then nods.

"Alright. I don't want to force you to anything." Satsuki smiles.

"Thanks."

"Of course. I will sleep now. Have a good night, sis." Satsuki says and hugs Ryuko.

"Good night, Satsuki..." Ryuko answers and watches Satsuki entering her room. Ryuko goes to sleep as well...

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"Send a unit to Mie. Find the Mankanshokus and bring them to Neo-REVOCS..."

AN: Oh oh, looks like Ichiro has an innocent family as a target now. Like I said, Chapter 15 "Desiring Purpose" will come out in about two or three weeks unless we experience a miracle. Don't worry, it will come. :) I'd be very grateful about a review! See you next time!... man, am I glad I finished this chapter, really, I felt bad for leaving you guys in the dark for so long. :D But yeah, the next chapter will come. :)

Desiring Purpose

AN: Hey guys! A new chapter is out! Also I have a good message! Next week is the last one I have school with, then I have holidays until October 26th so I assume I can drop two more chapters by then! Also, in case anyone here reads on Computer or Laptop, keep YouTube ready, because there's gonna be some music you can listen to while reading, and I highly suggest you do because the characters in the certain situations will hear it as well! :D Alright, have fun reading and let me know what you think, I'm really excited to hear your guys opinions on this chapter! :)

Birds are chirping. There's no snowfall today - however, the land is still white. Out here in the nature it's rather idyllic and enjoyable.

"Makoooooooo!" Mataro yells. The young man walks slightly confused through the village, in which he and his family lives.

"Mum is going to be really stinky if you are not coming back now!" he yells again. Just as he tries to enter the local library, he is ambushed by Mako!

"Gotcha!" Mako laughs happily. Mataro chuckles as he see's his big sister helping him up from the snow. Mako's hair got longer, it's up to her shoulders now, and she did grew a few more centimeters... but she still is the same playful and hyperactive girl like people know her to be.. Her smile isn't as overexageratting as before, but more warm and kind now. Whenever someone see's her smile, that person has to smile too. It has something catching on it.

"Haha, I'm sorry, Mataro, but I couldn't help myself!" Mako smiles.

"Oh, it's alright! Mum and Dad are searching for you the entire day already, did you forgot we wanted to work on this super duper large croquette?!"

"WHAT, NOW!?" she asks surprised.

"Y-yes, we wanted to..."

"WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR, COME ON, I CAN SMELL THE CROQUETTE ALREADY!" Mako laughs and drags Mataro behind her across the village. Besides the library, there is also a small theatre, the plaza, where people are building up their market booths, a supermarket and a large park for teenager to meet up with. Even though the village has become a bit more urban than usual, nature is still a large part of it. Mako slams the door to her family house open, her white-blue dress with a grey buckle blows into the house, paired with snow from the ground. With a kind smile, Mako looks around and is then attacked by her dog Guts. Guts jumps at Mako and licks her face happily.

"Ah, hey!" Mako grins and hugs her dog, then she puts him on the ground again. Quickly running into the kitchen, Mako finds her mother Sukuyo and her father Barazo while Mataro deals with Guts. There is indeed a large croquette in the room. It has been filled already, all that is left is the skin. With large eyes and an even larger mouth she looks at the croquette which is as big as the table the family eats on - and don't even start about how to bake or fry the croquette, that's an entirely different story. Barazo turns his head to Mako and grins.

"Aha, Mako! We've missed you!" her father says, and then his glasses shine up briefly.

"Hello, sweetheart. Your hair is soaked and wet, have you been playing in the snow? You should dry them quickly before you get a cold." mother Sukuyo suggests.

"Oh and please don't put the hairdryer on three, otherwise our bathroom goes up in flames again." her father grins. Mako nods.

"The bathroom's still damaged!?"

"Uhm, yes, but hey, even if you get hurt, your father is the best surgeon in the village!" Barazo grins. Mako nods happy.

"Yes! You are the one and only surgeon and therefore the best there is! I'm proud of you!" Mako says smiling and then runs to the bathroom where she starts drying her hair, while Mataro visits his room. Although Mako is still rather hyperactive, she did took a step back and became a bit more calm - but that was to expect, since she got older now. Right as she leaves the bathroom and walking through the small but cozy house, she opens the door to her room and enters it. Photos of wonderful landscapes are hanging on the wall on her right - coasts, cliffs, mountains, forests, even a few images with mega cities of Japan, combined with the nature. Mako has got an eye for this - after all, someone who is hyperactive wants to see much and experience something new, and with photos, she can keep these experiences, so why don't use it as an advantage? The young woman takes a closer look through her images - and then, under one of the landscape images of Kumano, she finds an old picture of her and Ryuko. Mako smiles slightly, but also with a feeling of pining, sitting down, and then sighing... after all, Mako believes Ryuko and Satsuki are dead, according to the media.

"... Ryuko..."

...

"Throw the screwdriver over here, Ira!" Sanageyama orders. Gamagoori grabs the screwdriver in the box next to him and gives it to Sanageyama, who's wearing only his tanktop and a jeans at the moment.

"I rather hand it to you." Gamagoori answers and then grabs a large armor plate which he holds onto a wall with a few gaps. Sanageyama then climbs up a ladder and starts inserting several screws into the plates. Both of them work at the Zeppelin, more specifically, at a gun battery. The Samurai keeps the rest of the screws between his teeth to catch one after another quick and easily.

Just as he wants to insert another screw, both men hear steps from behind.

"How's it looking, men?" Mikisugi asks his "workers." Satsuki is accompanying him.

"Outer walls are done in a bit." Sanageyama answers and inserts another screw.

"What he said. I assume we are done in a few hours." Gamagoori reacts. Mikisugi nods satisfied.

"Good." he answers and continues walking with Satsuki.

"So what is this supposed to be exactly? A second "Naked Sol?" Satsuki asks Mikisugi as they visit various parts of the Zeppelin.

"Humanity's Purity." is it's name. With "Naked Sol," we've emphasized our soul as humans, and with "Humanity's Purity," we show our pure bodies. If the Life Fibers have some sort of joker card, we got one too. No one can take the beauty of a human body, male or female."

"I suppose so..." Satsuki answers rather unimpressed and leaves the Zeppelin with the Nudist Beach boss. The Zeppelin itself looks decent already. Banners of Nudist Beach hang on the sides of the Zeppelin. Both leaders enter the base.

"Tsumugu and I planned on talking with you this evening once it got quiet."

"Of course. It's about Ryuko, yes?"

"Yes. We need to figure out what we do with her and the Kamui."

"Good. We can speak about this." Satsuki answers. Mikisugi nods. Both Satsuki and Mikisugi walk through the hall and see Nonon practicing a bit more with her musician clones, and then, Ryuko actually appears from the gym, a bit sweaty, but satisfied. She

speaks to both of them. Senketsu is hanging on Ryuko's shoulder, but he can still see everything well.

"Well would you look at that, someone was training." Mikisugi reacts impressed and musters Ryuko who wears a red tanktop and short trousers.

"I was bored and figured I could do something for my body." Ryuko grins. Mikisugi takes a good look at Ryuko and then pats her shoulder and goes away.

"Not bad." Satsuki answers.

"I'm not just sitting around in my room after all." Ryuko chuckles, and so does Satsuki.

"I hope so, my sister. I was planning on drinking a tea, would you like one too?"

"Sure, why not?"

"Excellent." Satsuki answers happy and walks with her sister to a rest room...

...

Interrogation room, 1 PM. Nui and Hoomaru sit there for three hours already. On Hoomarus side of the desk, a block with notes and a glass of water stand in front of her. It's quiet. No one says anything.

"..."

"..."

"Hoomaru?" Nui asks with a slight smile.

"Yes, Nui?" Hoomaru reacts concentrated.

"How are humans supposed to live without a purpose?"

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand the question."

"You humans are all stupid. You just walk around on this "world," you do your love thingies, disillusional funksies, but all of it doesn't have any sense, you just do it. That is dumb."

"Have you ever considered the thought that this might just be the purpose of it? That humans do not live because they serve something, but because they live to actually live and enjoy their short lives on earth? Isn't this more or less what you are doing as well?"

"My games serve a higher purpose."

"Even today?"

"... stupid question."

"Why?"

"Because it's stupid, Hoomaru."

"Nui, you often contradict yourself. I know you are afraid of dying, however, you are not making it easy for your allies to like you."

"I don't care. I dislike them and they dislike me. But I don't understand why I need to die. That is unfair."

"Well, you can think what you want about this, for you it's naturally unfair, but I understand the reason why you might have to... go."

"I hate them all."

"..."

"They are all stupid."

"Nui?"

"Hm?"

"What do you want to accomplish in your life? Your new life, I mean."

"I... don't know." Nui answers very hesititious, and her smile disappears for a brief moment.

"You've been a better liar before."

"..."

"... I..."

"Tell me. We are in a private room. No one is listening."

"... I don't really have anything to accomplish. Why would I need to think about all of this if I will end up being... uhm..."

"Yes...?"

"... eh, I just want to proect Ryuko and Satsuki. I love them."

"Why?"

"... they're my sisters." Nui answers quickly and seemingly ashamed, as she briefly takes a look to the ground. Hoomaru nods slowly.

"But they don't want you to protect them because they hate you?"

"I... think they hate me, yes."

"You think?"

"No. Ryuko cut my arms off but... I'm sure she didn't meant it like this, and when... I wouldn't hurt her, no, I would not, I..."

Hoomaru waits concentrated. Nui hesitates a brief moment again. Something's clearly on her mind. Suddenly, she smiles again.

"...ahaha, I'm just joking, Hoomaru, as if you seriously believed me!" Nui smiles happily. Hoomaru stays ice cold though.

"Do. Not. Lie. On. Me." Hoomaru answers ice cold, with Nui feeling trapped. Hoomaru knows that Nui only pretends her smile in this very moment, all to avoid the topic.

"Ooooooh, why would I lie to you? Really, we know each other for so long already, I would never lie!" Nui smiles.

"Because you know that I am aware of you lying. What you just said was something you didn't wanted to say, but you did it, and now you are trying to avoid the topic. Can you even differentiate between reality and fantasy anymore, between love and hate, friendship and rivalry? I believe your largest problem isn't your psychopathic and sadistic behaviour, but your mind that fully lost it's connection to reality. You seem as if you are losing your mind now that Lady Ragyo is gone."

"Losing my mind?! Ohhh, sacrebleu, I wouldn't lose my mind!" Nui reacts with a large, bright smile. Hoomaru shakes her head annoyed.

"I know I'm expecting a lot from you, but if you want Ryuko and Satsuki to like or even accept you, you need to work on yourself and show them you care for them, and I can imagine this is quite hard for a person like you that does not care for others."

"But I am caring for them!? I love to knock on Satsuki's door every night just to run away! And this big guy with the blonde hair always writes dramatic messages to his mama and papa which I really need to visit at some point if you get what I mean, *winks* and this weird guy with the red hair and the stupid hair style which I love to call "Mohawk Man," really, he always showers with a gel that makes him smell like strawberries! I do like strawberries, but I think cherries are a teeny tiny bit better, you like cherries too?" Nui asks curious. Hoomaru stands up.

"We should stop here. We are sitting here for quite some time again."

"What, no, Hoomaru, we won't! Talking with you is fun in a very cruel way. You always appear so quiet and relaxed but deep inside you really are angry on me which I find funny because that means you like me! Oh, Hoomaru, I'm so happy we know each other, you always liked me!"

"The day will come where you will wish you never made me angry, Nui." Hoomaru reacts.

"You should listen to yourself. On the other hand, you don't care probably. But you probably can't care anyway, you weren't made to care. You know, Nui..." Hoomaru answers and walks to Nui.

"When you were ten, I should have stopped Lady Ragyo. You've always been an evil little girl, even in young ages, but this latent psychopathic behaviour, the sadism and the unbreakable loyalty towards a cause were things you need to, as Lady Ragyo said, "acquire" first. Lady Ragyo never wanted you to remember what happened back then. A small kid made out of Life Fibers that has been sent through hell and back 24 hours a day, all because Lady Ragyo needed a tool that works well for her until it can be thrown away. This is the only reason why you existed, and you know that very well, yet you are not able to comprehend what this truly means. It means that you never had the chance to experience the world with your own eyes. Your view on the world is purely based on what Lady Ragyo taught you. But what I think is the worst thing is that you have been born to be a tool and die as such, and that you did. That is wrong. And disturbing... because I could have been in Shinra Koketsu too."

"Lady Ragyo never saw me just as a tool! She was a great teacher and an even greater mama! It's not my fault your dumb mommy and daddy got shred into thousands parts because of an explosion. Would have been funny if it would have been my fault though, because then I had another imaginary medal in my room, ahahaha!" Nui laughs provoking.

"Careful, Nui. If you want to have more conversations, you better stop."

"Awwwwwww, is Hoomaru insulted?" Nui asks provoking.

"I'm going to be honest: No matter what happened to you, I will feel sorry for you and I will try my best to make sure you can get through this war without dying. I believe you do not need to die. We all deserve a second chance, even you do. But what I will not do is accepting to be insulted by an 17 year young, psychopathic and antisocial girl. I will talk with you but only if you respect me!

Whenever it comes to you, you expect people to respect you, you expect me to care for you and I do, but when I give you a small example of my life, or a general idea, you start insulting and forget absolutely everything I said because it contradicts your belief. Accept already that not everyone will share the same opinion like you. I know you want to annoy me because you think people only love you if you make them attack you, but this is paradox and wrong. So no, Nui, I will not react to this question the way you want me to. I have far better things to do than getting one insult after another by you!" Hoomaru answers, opens the door, takes her stuff and leaves the room. Nui looks confused.

"I don't understand this. Why does she not like me? I haven't done anything to her." Nui asks herself confused and sighs. Nui doesn't know she lives in an illusion even if there are small signs that signalize this illusion is slowly falling apart. Eventually, she leaves the room...

In the meantime, Ryuko and Satsuki take a walk through the halls of the base. The younger sister is wearing Senketsu again. As they enter the command center, they see Nonon and Houka at the planning table. Both sisters watch them interested.

"What are you guys up to?" Ryuko asks curious. Houka and Nonon look up to Ryuko.

"I've analyzed the data I achieved when we attacked the manufacture. Mikisugi and Tsumugu already know it, you both however do not, so let me explain quickly." Houka answers while Nonon looks at the table. You can see the destroyed manufacture on it. Tsumugu sits in the background in a rather dark corner, smoking a cigarette and watching Senketsu in distrust.

"As I expected, the manufacture indeed produced Life Fibers. Iori and I are unsure however how they produced the Life Fibers, but we do have the theory that they used human DNA to produce it, which would be a remarkable effort, as it would make the existence of a second primordial Life Fiber obsolete. I could imagine they took a strong human and copied his DNA into a single Life Fiber which would then copy itself. The theory is very watery but we have to start somewhere. In any case: Thanks to a few quick scans I was able to draw out the most important information about the manufacture, or better, about the transport routes, and it seems as if the manufacture was rather used as a storage hall for the Life Fibers, and not as a production facility. However, I could not determine where the Life Fibers went." Houka explains and opens a map on his Laptop that shows various red dots on Japan.

"These dots are factories. These factories do not exist. Officially, at least. There are no streets that lead to them, no names, nothing, however, the raw material for the Life Fibers have to come from there. The only problem I have at the moment is where they ultimately want to send the Life Fibers to. I highly doubt this Harime wants to save them up for nothing. I would have found it out, however, the security administrator Yamamoto found out about my attempts on hacking the system."

"Yeah we know that fella." Ryuko answers.

"Miss Jakuzure and I will start a brief operation in which we are going to investigate the facility once more to determine where the Life Fibers were brought to. Since the manufacture has been destroyed, there won't be much resistance... probably a few men guarding the canalisation, but nothing we couldn't handle."

"Very well. Stay safe during the operation." Satsuki reacts. Houka nods.

"Of course, Satsuki." the hacker answers and walks back to Nonon to talk about the plan some more...

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Presidential Office of Neo-REVOCS. Masaru works in the office of the Director, after all, his boss hasn't come back from Nagoya yet. It's a strange feeling to sit on the place where all REVOCS CEO's sit on, especially since Masaru knows about Ragyo's plans now. While he takes a look at old files and folders, he also discovers protocols about the Life Fiber hybrid experiments regarding Ryuko Matoi and Nui Harime. Seeing this makes him feel uncomfortable, but it's not just that. As he discovers more and more about weapon prototypes and how cold and open Ragyo was about her plans in the documents she gave to high ranked employees, even the security administrator needs to swallow. Masaru tries to investigate more about Ichiro Harime but he can't find anything about him, it's as if he was never born on this world and therefore not a Life Fiber hybrid... or at least a Life Fiber born on this world.

"... what am I doing here..." Masaru asks himself doubtful. A Samurai opens the door and enters the room.

"Mr. Yamamoto. The Director expects your arrival in Nagoya as soon as possible."

"Why?"

"We expect resistance in Nagoya. A certain Mr. Inumuta is on his way. The Director said you'd be interested in this subject."

"Inumuta!?"

"Yes."

"... that would be a chance to find out how this man works... and maybe I can take him down. Good, give me five minutes, make the helicopter ready." Masaru orders and stands up quickly.

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Mikisugi and Tsumugu are on top of the island, watching the evening. Both men have to go to the meeting with Satsuki later on. Nonon and Houka walk pass them and take a helicopter to Nagoya.

"Y'know, Tsumugu... once we defeated the Life Fibers... like, really defeated them and they never come back... I still ask myself what I'm going to do next."

"You never thought about that?"

"Have you?"

"Isn't quite easy to do so. I don't know whether I will find peace once the Life Fibers are eliminated. It won't bring my sister back."

"I understand you."

"It might be because of Matoi, her Kamui, the annoying Harime, the uniforms for Satsuki's companions and herself... not even here at Nudist Beach we are free from Life Fibers."

"I know. I sometimes don't like thinking about it either. Satsuki and her friends are good and useful members though. Ryuko's Kamui is dangerous, but it wields strong powers, and we need to find a way to heal the poor girl. And Harime... as much as I dislike her, Iori speaks in high tones about her and her combat efficiency is beyond good and evil."

"Mhm." Tsumugu grumbles. Both men continue to stay quiet for a while, with Mikisugi looking at the various buildings of the base. And then, he suddenly chuckles briefly.

"Heh... I think I know what I'm going to do." Mikisugi answers and smiles slightly and Tsumugu.

"Hm?"

"I'll probably enter a bar and get myself a good drink, I haven't had one in years. Naked, of course. I wanna see if I get kicked out." Mikisugi grins.

"Can I join?"

"Sure."

"Isshin would have been ashamed by this."

"Aikuro, Tsumugu! We have to talk about more important things and not about your future plans!" Mikisugi speaks in a lower tone to imitate Isshin a bit. Tsumugu nods satisfied.

"Yeah... pretty much." Tsumugu grins...

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Ryuko and Satsuki in the meantime ate their dinner and sit with Gamagoori and Iori in the canteen for some small talk. Gamagoori is speaking at the moment.

"... but the most rewarding feeling to me is gratefulness. That is how I see it. That, and my will to protect others, fuels my resolve." the tall man explains.

"Noble, Gamagoori." Iori answers. Gamagoori then sighs.

"... sadly that requires me to sometimes go over corpses. There was a student who stole a Goku-Uniform. It happened briefly before Matoi attended our school... it was not necessary to kill him but I did. Lady Satsuki, do you sometimes think like me too? That you should have decided a few things different back then in the academy?" he asks.

"Indeed, Gamagoori. There were times where I asked myself if what I did was right or not. Up today, I disapprove my decision on killing humans just so we could hold up our terror regime and an illusion... when we did that... when I did that, I was like my mother. I can't believe I did that..."

"It happened, Satsuki. You can't change it anymore. I've been through some shit too... it was mostly just little stuff, you know, stealing some fruits or a chocolate bar, but you know, I also kicked peoples asses to make sure I appear strong and dangerous. Is it possible we all suffer from superiority complexes?" Ryuko grins curious. Senketsu chuckles.

"I've been thinking the same already. You all worry me." Senketsu chuckles.

"I don't." Iori answers proud and smiles.

"Secretly you do." Satsuki grins.

"Lie."

"Truth."

"Lie."

"You can't get out of this anymore, I trapped you." Satsuki chuckles.

"Like I said: you all worry me. See, that's why it sometimes is nice just to be clothing. I don't need to worry about these things, the person that wears me is great and that's that." Senketsu chuckles. Ryuko laughs about Senketsu's cool reaction.

"But you also literally just hang around." Gamagoori reacts.

"Well that is true, buuuut I could also jump around."

"I wonder how it feels like just jumping around instead of walking like a proper human."

"Oh it's not bad, it's actually fine."

"It is?" Gamagoori asks.

"Yes, I..." and suddenly, Ryuko starts coughing, until her head almost slams the table. Gamagoori and Iori stand up shocked, Satsuki's heart starts pumping quicker. She tries to comfort Ryuko while Gamagoori runs out of the room to get some medicine. Ryuko coughs blood, the table is messed up, and her skin starts feeling colder than usual, as Satsuki notices.

"Ryuko! Hey! Listen to me!" Satsuki orders worried. Iori goes to Satsuki and helps her remove the Kamui. As they lay down Senketsu, Iori starts investigating quickly if something is wrong with her body by touching her arms and torso area carefully. Thanks to his years of work with Life Fibers, he has a good idea of where to investigate, but weirdly enough, nothing seems to be of a problem.

"Where's Gamagoori and the medicine?!" Iori asks stressed. Ryuko seemingly starts sleeping, yet Satsuki and Iori keep her awake until Gamagoori comes back with a pile of medicine. The large man gives Ryuko a few pain killers and sedatives, and fortunately it seems to help, as Ryuko starts calming down after a few minutes. Her chin and upper body is covered with her own blood. Senketsu looks sad to the ground. His friend tries to grab him.

"Sen... ketsu, you okay...?" Ryuko asks her friend worried. Satsuki removes the blood on her body while Iori takes a look at Senketsu. However, he doesn't really want to get to her.

"Why does this happen all the time? Is that my fault?" Senketsu asks sad. Ryuko sighs and wants to hug him. Satsuki watches the Kamui in distrust once again, it slowly becomes more and more obvious that Satsuki develops a problem with Ryuko's Kamui, even if he is an ally - but nothing will stop Satsuki from protecting her sister, even if it would mean taking away what she loves. In the meantime, the Director of Neo-REVOCS, Ichiro Harime, watches the predicament in

a completely red and empty room. He can hear people talking in the background.

"Oh, Kiryuin... you make your life harder than you need to. Is it really that hard to just give me what I want? At this pace, Ryuko will probably die. I won't let this happen..." Ichiro mumbles to himself as he watches the scene with his eyes closed. Due to the connection of Ichiro himself with Senketsu, everything is well visible for him.

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A strong wind howls. It's evening, 9 PM. Nonon and Houka walk through the canalisation of Nagoya. Ashigaru seem to guard the tunnels. A lot is going on on the streets which is why they rely on the canalisation, and thanks to Houka's display on his arm, he can see very well if opponents are around them or behind walls, which Nonon then can lure with music to take them out.

"Brr, these tunnels are gross." Nonon gripes.

"They are indeed." Houka answers and takes a peek around a corner where he can see a Samurai. A ladder behind the Samurai leads up to the manufacture.

"Just the amount of people I calculated. Good." the hacker mentions and shoots with his silenced weapon the Samurai. The Samurai is incapacitated by a large Life Fiber bullet which sends him to sleep for the next few hours. His Katana falls into the canalisation water. Nonon quickly drags him away while Houka looks around, and then he opens the canalisation hatch. Nonon follows him. Up in the maintenance room, they both take a look carefully once more.

"Now let's see what we can find out." Houka says excited.

"I suppose so. Too bad these clowns guard the entrances
ashamingly well now."

"It is, yes."

Both friends walk through the various halls of the destroyed
manufacture. The night is well visible from here due to the crane that
destroyed everything. It's completely burned and black. Nonon and
Houka take a look at it and cautiously climb onto it to walk down a
few floors.

"Inu, there, come on." Nonon orders to her friend. Houka follows
Nonon down the crane. Destroyed Ashigaru are everywhere. The
main manufacture is completely wrecked.

"Matoi did... clean work..." Houka mentions as he investigates the
destroyed area. His display lights up which causes him to stand still
and watch it carefully. Nonon looks at it.

"Interesting... it detects Life Fibers from here already." Houka
realizes and sits down. Nonon watches him briefly and then sits
down as well while he starts typing on the various keyboards all over
his body. His eyes are focused on the display.

"How do you even collect these "data?" Don't you have to access
some kind of computer? Like, how does this even work?"

"I can hack into the security structure of the city from here, this of
course is hard to do in the canalisation as in the canalisation, there
are no electronical tools specifically for digital use."

"Uhhh... I suppose so, I'll just believe you." Nonon grins.

"I got access to the data banks, that's all you gotta know." Houka
explains in a nutshell. Nonon nods slowly.

"Yeaaaahhh..."

"You sit often enough next to me, Nonon. Am I really that bad of a teacher?" Houka asks smiling.

"I'm glad I can remember this stupid binary system with the ones and zeros, but uh, I think I stick to music and compositions." Nonon grins. Houka chuckles briefly and continues working... until he see's a red number rising up incredibly fast. The Impulse Regalia detect Life Fibers in the area, except those of the uniforms and Senketsu. An extremely large amount of them seem to be in Nagoya still, even though the manufacture has been destroyed.

"Knew they would hide it here." Houka reacts. Nonon nods and looks around once more.

"You think they are in the storage halls here?"

"Possibly, but I assume Neo-REVOCS isn't as stupid as I'd like them to be. There must be a secret hall or anything..." Houka thinks and stands up to search for more clues. He then enters a few command lines onto the display, resulting in some kind of 3D map appearing as a hologram in front of him, fed by satellite information he "borrowed." With this, he has an overview about everything around Nagoya, yet what lies below them is unknown to him. Houka tries to compare the satellite information with the data he found from the facility.

"You gonna take a look at the stuff you found with this weird hologram?" Nonon asks. Houka nods. He stays focused, types more on his keyboard, and after a minute, a basement is revealed under the facility which causes his eyebrows to rise up and a mischievous smile to shine.

"Well would you look at that. There is indeed a basement that is not part of the blueprints of the manufacture. Indescribable large too, it covers the entire industrial district. And of course one entrance is here. Good. Miss Jakuzure, let's move." Houka orders satisfied. He starts walking down the rest of the crane with Nonon, and as the reach the entrance halls, they can see flashlights moving - guards are here. The halls they just entered lead directly to the general

storage halls, which have access to whatever is below the manufacture. Groups of Ashigaru patrol here.

"There they are..." Houka mumbles quiet to his friend, which Nonon reacts with a small flute she starts playing. The flute lures a guard to their position. Houka quickly shoots the Ashigaru with an EMP bullet to incapacitate them and then goes on with Nonon. Carefully walking through the cold rooms in which snow already infested the area, they eventually arrive in the storage rooms. These are incredibly large, but... empty. Nothing is in there. Not anymore, at least. These storage rooms are all connected with the underground parking lots, and there is more than enough space to park five to seven transporters into it. Nonon then notices a large freight elevator with an equally high amount of space for vehicles. Their steps echo through the halls, until they take the elevator.

"Gosh, they do have it with their large monument-like buildings, do they?"

"The signature is getting stronger." Houka reacts and looks at Nonon with a slightly frightful face expression.

"I've never seen so many Life Fibers in one place..." he answers, unsure what to think. Nonon takes a look at his display - and there is indeed an amount of Life Fibers incomprehensible to count.

"The hell...?" she mumbles.

"... let's investigate this quickly and leave. We'll take a look around, see if we can drop some sort of tracking device onto the Life Fibers connected to my Regalia and then we need to leave. The others have to know this as soon as possible." Houka suggests. Nonon nods.

"You think there's some kind of primordial Life Fiber down there?"

"I hope not."

"Me neither." Nonon answers.

As they go down the elevator after two minutes - since the basement storage halls are indeed far below Nagoya - they finally end up in an completely dark place. Houka activates the lights and moves on. Both friends stand in a large, fully empty hall, with a large gate about 200 meters away. Something red shines out of it. Nonon and Houka approach the gate. The musician tries to peek through the gate - everything is shining red there.

"Oh boy..." she mumbles, while Houka overrides the console that opens the gate. Slowly, the mighty gate that is five times larger and ten times broader than them, opens, and the reveal is a horrible one...

Life Fibers are everywhere. Life Fibers that crawl on the walls, on the ground, on the ceiling, that quietly sing to communicate, and in the middle of the unbelievably large room, there is an amount of Life Fibers that would even make the primordial Life Fiber look like a ball of yarn. Both Houka and Nonon stay close to each other and keep their backs safe. Houka doesn't even try to analyze... it's just too many Life Fibers to put it into words.

"Oh.. my... freaking god." the musician mumbles.

"How is this possible...?"

"Are all these Life Fibers produced by this clown Harime, or was that auntie Ragyo? You can't... I mean, how is... what the... not even this weird Life Fiber ball could produce so much probably."

"They talk to each other. Remember what Harime said? Life Fibers communicate via singing, or music. I wonder what they are talking about..."

"Doesn't your uniform tell you what they say?"

"No... but once we are home I know what I have to do."

"Welcome." they suddenly hear from the dark, and steps are approaching them. Nonon and Houka look into the direction the voice came from - it's Ichiro Harime. He looks at them with a curious face - but you can see how cold and calculating he appears with the way he approaches them slowly. Sometimes, body movements say more than anything else.

"Houka Inumuta... and Nonon Jakuzure. You both seem to be some kind of pair, isn't that so? I've learned a lot about you both, by the memories I studied and the Life Fibers. You are quite loyal to Miss Kiryuin, aren't you? How's your friend doing?" he asks curious, but calm.

"Grrr..." Nonon grumbles. Houka stays calm - but of course he doesn't know about Ryuko and Senketsu.

"Inumuta, you are quite an interesting man, you always want to know a lot, go ahead, ask around." Ichiro suggests and takes a few steps closer to Houka, inspecting his Impulse Regalia.

"Interesting clothes. You surely want to know where all of these Life Fibers came from? I think this question is rather boring - but what I do believe to be interesting is what I would do with all of them. I can be honest with you, because really, I don't care if you know what I am doing or not. You can't stop me anyway. All you could do is postpone the inevitable. The death of humanity is certain." Ichiro continues and holds his arms behind his back.

"Honnouji-Academy, Inumuta. That's where the Life Fibers are sent to. You probably had an assumption already, but you weren't one hundred percent sure, were you? And that would be fatal, after all, you never miscalculate, do you? I could normally use someone like you. Someone who is trying to optimize everything, that tries to be the best they can be. That's admiring. I do that too. See... some call me a psychopath. Maybe I am. Why would I care? I hope I am."

"And what do you hope by gathering all of these "goods" in an overdimensional large room below a city?" the hacker asks back.

"See, when you take a closer look at humans, then you also know how they behave. Some of them are loyal and protective, like the large Ira Gamagoori. Some have an exciting amount of resolve, like Lady Satsuki. Then, there are men that stand for the human body themselves, like this Mikisugi. Heh, even our hybrid Ryuko and our "almost" Life Fiber Nui have human components. To your question: The reason why I store them all here is because I want a good show. You humans love good shows, do you? With an exciting finale that blows away your mind, and oh, trust me, you will get a finale you'll never forget." Ichiro smiles evil.

"You jerk." Nonon reacts.

"Oh and now that you speak up, dear Nonon... I got something special for you."

"Good for you."

"Specially for you. You like music? Play concerts... I have something you and your friend will like. I wonder if you can survive it." Ichiro asks himself. Suddenly, Couturiers in large and impressive robes appear out of the dark.

"Ah damn it." Houka whispers annoyed.

"... crap."

"Bind their eyes and take them as prisoners." Ichiro orders.

"Where'd you wanna bring us, clown?!" Nonon asks.

"Now that you now that all the Life Fibers will be sent to Honnouji soon, you of course need to get out of this predicament. I'm sure this will be a concert Nagoya will love." Ichiro grins, as his Couturiers grab the two friends and take them as prisoners.

"The Life Fibers are ready to be transported and have no reason to stay here anymore. Send units out..."

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A whistle is audible - it's Nui. The psychopath visits the working halls of Shiro Iori, in a good mood and interested to work on their new project. She and Iori want to improve Satsuki's "Wrath Regalia." However, when she arrives in the halls, all the Grand Couturier can find is Hoomaru, crocheting relaxed. Nui takes a look around interested and finds a little note on Iori's desk.

"Miss Harime, I'm unavailable due to a meeting, please continue working on the uniform. Thanks." she reads. Nui rolls her eyes and moves her hair that hangs close to her scar away, then she looks to Hoomaru. Seems like she is working on a scarf. The look makes Nui chuckle slightly.

"Mhmhm, am I really seeing you crocheting?" Nui asks curious and leans her head towards Hoomaru. Hoomaru slowly looks up.

"Yes."

"You are bad at it. Why'd you even try it?" Nui provokes with a smile.

"Practice makes the master, you should know that best." Hoomaru answers in a rather annoyed way.

"Right, darling." Nui reacts sarcastic and leaves the hall, and as she is gone, Hoomaru takes a deep breath and continues working. It seems to become more and more clear that Hoomaru won't listen much longer to Nui's mean attempts to annoy her. While Nui walks through the various halls of the base, she sees Nonon and her musicians collecting their instruments. Nui continues walking and eventually passes by Ryuko.

"Ryuuuuuko! Hey! How are you doing! Where's your sweet boyfriend Senketsu? Hanging around again?" Nui grins, as she notices Ryuko doesn't wear Senketsu. Ryuko passes by Nui without a word and hits her shoulder with her own. Nui chuckles and moves on.

"Oh well, seems like she is in a bad mood, well, what can you do?" Nui asks herself and takes the path to the dormitories, and as she walks by the closed doors of the command center, she notices that between the doors is a little gap which makes it easy to listen to if you stand close to it. Nui doesn't seem to be interested...

"... and we need to take a look at Ryuko's sickness. You all heard what the Doppelgänger said. He knows about our plans and he knows we have to get rid of that Kamui, but if we do that, Ryuko's gonna be annoying." Tsumugu explains. And with that, Nui gets interested and does a 180 on point, going to the door.

"Sickness?" Nui asks herself confused and starts listening.

"I'm just waiting for Houka and Nonon's arrival. The Director talked about a corrupt Entity Fiber. Doesn't Harime have some of them?" Satsuki mentions.

"Well it would be a possible solution if we could develop a cure based on an... "healthy" Entity Fiber." Tsumugu thinks.

"You want to remove Harime's Entity Fibers? Wouldn't that kill her?" Iori asks confused.

"Probably, yes." Mikisugi answers.

"I'll have to be honest. As annoying as Harime can sometimes be, but I do not believe we should sacrifice the life of a person to rescue someone else. This isn't right."

"It's about my sister, Iori."

"That is correct, however, I strongly believe that we can develop a cure without killing one of our most valuable allies. Why don't we try to gather a few Entity Fibers if we happen to face off the Director again - we could force a battle if nothing helps. We can't kill him, but we can find out more about him by that. We'd just need to know where these Entity Fibers are located. I remember the Banchi that was in the Goku-Uniforms, but this is something else..."

"Then we need to take Ryuko into battles against the Director. Our advantage is that the Director does not wish to kill you and Ryuko, Satsuki. He only aims to kill Harime."

"And if we can't get these Entity Fibers? What if we can't develop a cure with them?" Satsuki asks pessimistic.

"Oh I could imagine a corrupted Entity Fiber could be healed by a healthy one. Or at least it's effect will be nullified. If that however does not happen, we'll find another way, we always did. I suggest we include Harime into the plan." Iori suggests.

"We won't." Satsuki orders.

"Why?"

"Once Harime finds out about Ryuko's possible death, she will speak to her. Harime doesn't care about rules or the feelings of others. If I'd tell her to stay quiet, the last thing she'll do is do exactly that. That's how she behaves. Cold, unable to empathize." Satsuki thinks, angered by Iori's suggestion. Nui bites her teeth together while hearing that. It annoys her hearing this characterization and how Satsuki moments ago suggested to sacrifice her for Ryuko without her consent.

"... you..." Nui mumbles and shakes her head in disbelief.

"As you wish. In any case, a healthy Entity Fiber will help. You said at the start of the meeting, before Tsumugu joined, that Ryuko is

supposed to be "delivered" to Neo-REVOCS in exchange for a cure?" Iori asks. Mikisugi leans forward to answer his question.

"That's what he said, yes. I'm afraid if we send Ryuko to Neo-REVOCS, he might actually heal her, yet at the same time he will try to perform something equally dangerous like the incident with Kamui Junketsu. And then we won't have an hyperactive girl like Mako that will help her."

"Ryuko..." Nui mumbles shocked. Her cold Life Fiber heart stops pumping for a brief moment. Stress becomes visible in her face. Something that doesn't happen to Nui, as Nui is always happy, and yet calculative and ice cold.

"That is to expect. But what are we going to do with her Kamui? This alien knows our every move as long as Ryuko is with us." Tsumugu asks.

"We could take it from Ryuko by reasoning that we'd have to investigate Senketsu more." Mikisugi suggests.

"That'll only work one or two more times, after that, Satsuki's sister will get suspicious and moreso Senketsu." Iori mentions.

"Do it, Iori. And see if you can find a way to make sure this abomination of a Director that is Ichiro Harime will be unable to spy on us." Satsuki orders, with Iori nodding. Nui swallows and quickly enters her room, passing by Gamagoori and Sanageyama who have a little conversation. She doesn't mind them which confuses them as they would have expected a mean joke from her now. Nui locks the door. Both men shrug their shoulders. Then, the Grand Couturier takes a look at her puppet collection.

"Think, Nui, THINK! What are you going to do now?! Satsuki's going to kill you if you speak with poor Ryuko..." Nui mumbles stressed. The two clones on top of the pyramid collection, with the blue and red bowtie on the hair, jump down and grow in size, looking at Nui worried. Their eye patches too are blue and red.

"You can't allow Ryuko to die, Nui! You serve them! What else should you do? If they die, you lost."

"Miss Harime, you need to calm down!"

"Miss Harime, these stupid humans do not know how great you are! They should listen to you!"

"I need to be careful... need to help Ryuko... but without Satsuki noticing it... maybe they find a cure? What if they don't? Oh, no, no, no, no... I knew Ryuko would feel bad! Is it because of me?! Why would I care? Would I care? Should I? What does that even mean?! Ryuko would never trust me! She hates me! No, she loves me! Damn it! If it wouldn't have been for that stupid daddy you and Ryuko could be besties! But no, you had to kill him!"

"..."

"... if only Lady Ragyo would be here. Lady Ragyo would know what to do. Lady Ragyo would..."

The clones just watch Nui mumbling irritated, with every sentence getting more and more quiet, until you'd have to hold your ear right next to Nui's mouth to actually hear what she says. Thirty seconds later, Nui slowly looks up and watches her clones, not knowing what to do.

"Do you know what Love and Hate means?"

"Uhm... Love... and Hate are two sides of the same coin. You... you hurt someone, they hurt you back, because they take their time for you... which means they love you enough to... to... spend time with you?"

"... then why does it feel like they just want to get rid of me?"

"... Miss Harime?"

"... they just want to get rid of me. I haven't done anything to them."

"Miss Harime?"

"... yes?"

"A-are... you alright?"

"... if only I could smile like a blooming flower..."

"..."

...

...

...

Some time later...

"Leave them here. The Director will give additional order soon." says a Samurai. Steps are audible, and then, a Couturier removes the rags around Houka's and Nonon's eyes. Both friends seem to be in an strange, empty room, in which vents and banks are in. The room needs some renovation. Eventually, the Couturier leaves the room with a Samurai and a few Ashigaru, with the Ashigaru laying down Houka's and Nonon's equipment on the ground briefly before leaving. The pair arms themselves and notice the door to be locked.

"So what is this all about?" Houka wonders.

"Seems like a changing room."

"I suppose so."

"Maybe part of an dilapidated building. That Doppelgänger clown surely is annoying, and if he's like the original, he probably has some sick game ready for us."

"That is to expect, yes. In any case we need to find a way out of here. Give me a moment." Houka suggests and sits down, and then

he starts typing more command lines via his keyboards onto the display. He briefly frowns. Nonon notices that his typing attempts are not registered.

"That's not good."

"Seems like your weird computer gave up on you."

"Display. And yes, it doesn't work... I suppose there is some sort of disturbance? Maybe a device?" Houka questions, with Nonon only able to shrug, and then walking around. On the other end of the room is a large door that seems to be slightly open. Nonon opens it entirely and finds an completely empty, long hallway that is equally as dilapidated and dreary as everything else here, and the lights are bad too.

"Inu, look."

"He's just waiting for us to take that path."

"Do we have another choice?"

"I'd calculate it, but my uniform doesn't work so I suppose no."

"Then shall we go?"

"Yes." Houka answers. Nonon and Houka both walk through the hall. Posters of bands or theater groups hang on the walls, and event advertisement, yet you can see these things rather badly due to the lack of light. Their steps echo through the hall. On the other end of the hall, they can hear voices, and the voices are pretty loud too. Their volume is only weakened by the walls around the two.

"This building must have been left for years."

"Yep. What a great adventure we once again embarked onto."

"At the very least we are not bored."

"Mhm." Nonon reacts with a smug smile. Soon after, both arrive at the end of the hall - under the door frames are lights shining. Nonon and Houka open the doors together and a sight is revealed that couldn't be much more impressive.

It appears to be a stadium the pair is located at - the Nagoya Culture Stadium. The audience? Ashigaru, Samurai, and many loyal employees of Neo-REVOCS. The stadium itself is rather large, and there is a podest in the center of it, with several steps leading onto it. Everything here is noble and elegant, as if you would be in some kind of open air theater... with thousands of goons and probably mind controlled soldiers watching. The lights shine at Nonon and Houka, and right after they took their first steps in disbelief, a monitor on the other end of the stadium turns on, in which they can see Director Ichiro with a sinister smile watching them. Around the audience is a large transparent wall that protects them from incoming objects, and under the monitor is a large dome like room connected with the walls, with Masaru in charge of the stadium.

"Welcome once again in Nagoya, dear Miss Jakuzure, honorable Mister Inumuta. It would be stupid to believe that Nudist Beach could start a second operation just because their first one was a success, here, in Nagoya, the city, in which clothing is what makes us truly human. Was it really your goal to find out where we send the Life Fibers to once they are produced? You didn't plan on destroying anything? Was that all? I certainly do not believe it, and I fear the noble audience does not either. Very well. Miss Jakuzure! I heard you love to make music? The dear Ashigaru and Samurai of Neo-REVOCS expect a show from you and your boyfriend, because if not... well... I suppose you know what happens then. Let the show begin!" Ichiro smiles and leans back onto a red chair, and then, the monitor turns off.

The moment Houka and Nonon reach the top of the podest in the stadium center, the walls all around them open slowly, and Ashigaru approach them, armed with melee weapons. Nonon raises her eyebrows while Houka tries to analyze the amount of hostile forces

they are going to face now, yet this is impossible. However, Houka seems to know why now when he takes a look at Masaru that watches him carefully.

(AN: Listen with your heart, or with your eyes, cause Nonon's gonna play some music now! Go to YouTube and type in "Kill La Kill IF Nonon Jakuzure Valor Theme" to listen during the battle! Nonon, Houka and everyone else hears it too! :D)

"These clowns really want to kick our butts, oh, just you wait, I'll show y'all how great my music can be!" Nonon gipes annoyed and throws Nui's musician clones onto the ground that quickly grow and pull out their instruments, starting a track with a mix between rock and orchestra. Houka rolls his eyes to the music but the sound waves the musicians and Nonon produce help fighting off the incoming Neo-REVOCS units. More and more Ashigaru storm their position, with the clones forming a circle around their mistress and her friend. Nonon proceeds to fly into the air to combat the Director's forces with her guitar, while Houka fires EMP rounds with his rifle to deactivate the opponent. In the background, the audience enjoys the battle. Lights shine onto the combattants.

"How many soldiers do these jerks even have!?" Nonon wonders as she takes a look at the battlefield. Seeing how many opponents they need to face, Nonon flies to the audience which is however well protected by the walls. She does however also notice the power connections and the rather instable foundation of them, which gives her an mean but maybe effective idea to get out of here. Flying the stadium up wouldn't help as the audience is still armed and they would gun her and Houka down if they would try to flee that way. As Houka is hit by an Ashigaru's blade, he kicks them away and fires annoyed first at that very unit, then to the dome where Masaru is. Masaru stands up excited and activates a communication device with which the stadium can hear him.

"We finally see each other face to face, Houka Inumuta! I've heard about you, you tried to hack into REVOCS systems! Isn't that

pathetic to you? Who do you think you are? Let's see how you would like it if I analyze YOUR data?!"

"*sigh*... that is the security administrator I suppose, of course he wants me." Houka mumbles annoyed and shakes his head. Snow falls down and blurs Nonon vision a bit, yet she can clearly see how more Samurai appear. They just left the gates and run through the hordes of Ashigaru to storm Houka and her musicians. Without his uniform abilities, Houka struggles though.

"Nonon!" he yells to his friend. Nonon reacts and flies down.

"Is there a way to get into this dome? Without my uniform I can't fight but I think I know the reason why now!"

"Hold on!" Nonon answers and grabs Houka's arm. Houka's scared by that in the first moment while Nonon flies him to the dome. The clones in the meantime still fight off the Ashigaru with their trumpets, drums and other instruments rather well, but it's just a matter of time until they are defeated. Masaru watches Houka and Nonon flying to him and so, he rubs his hands in excitement. Nonon drops Houka onto the dome, and apparently, there is a large hatch that really does lead into the dome. Houka jumps right into it, does a roll and lands in the room where Masaru was just waiting for him, alone, but seemingly with a plan.

"The greatest Hacker Nudist Beach and the Honnouji-Academy ever had." Masaru grins excited. Houka keeps his weapon ready.

"Move." Houka orders while his eyes all are concentrated on the many consoles behind Masaru. Masaru smiles and suddenly takes off his shirt which reveals a second Dreamer Regalia! Houka raises his eyebrows as reaction.

"The Director made a second Dreamer Regalia just for me. And it has all it needs to eliminate you." Masaru answers and slowly walks a circle around Houka and vice versa.

"I'm touched."

"You should be. After all, how much time did anyone truly spent for you?"

"Time is not interesting. All that counts is the result - and you achieve a good result by knowing what your enemy can do."

"Too bad you don't know anything about me."

"I don't think I need data against an amateur."

"You think you're funny, do you?"

"I do, yes." Houka smiles sarcastic and stands behind the consoles, holding his hands behind his back. Masaru activates his Goku-Uniform and transforms into the Dreamer Regalia.

"I think we as two men with digital understanding can agree on... solving our problematic equation on an digital level, yes?" Masaru asks. Both men can still hear Nonon's music well.

"Oh, I agree indeed, however, I believe the solution to your part of the equation is rather simple and obvious."

"Oh? How'd you come up with that?"

"I've calculated it." Houka answers and suddenly slams his fist onto the console buttons behind him, causing them to turn off the disturbance that deactivated his Regalia. The security administrator reacts with Life Fibers that explode in a red smoke cloud which fills up the entire room. Suddenly, a blue grid with ones and zeroes everywhere appears in Houka's eyes, and the walls of the dome form into blue walls with green bars that slowly fill up and then reset themselves. In front of Houka stands Masaru who appears in dull, black and red colors, while Houka appears as blue and green cubes and colors. Nonon's music changes drastically as well, sounds electronic all of a sudden and full of adrenaline.

(AN: This is one of my favorite parts. Change the music, for now, it's Houka's turn! Type in "Kill La Kill IF Houka Inumuta Valor Theme" in the YouTube search and listen while reading, you'll like this! :D)

"Interesting." Houka reacts as he experiences the effects of the Dreamer Regalia, because now he is able to see the power circuits and energy that flows through the entire stadion, even through the walls slightly. Masaru attacks Houka, yet Houka dodges and kicks Masaru in the back, then taking a few steps back. The hacker quickly focuses on the environment and starts typing commands onto his keyboard which even appear in front of Houka. Problem: Masaru see's them as well and starts typing with keyboards that suddenly appear onto his arm as well. Both men deliver a complete clusterfuck of a battle fought with words and commands than actual hand to hand combat, and the worst they manage to deal to each other are little hits or burns after a successful command counter.

"You think you're the only one able to type commands?!"

"I think you are out of options." Houka reacts and suddenly types down a line that overclocks the energy systems of the stadium up to an amount where it's getting instable! Masaru tries to counter the line yet Houka expected that, and as he activates the orders he just typed in, both men hear a satisfied female voice

STRUCTURE OF THIS WORLD IS FELT

Following up, the walls at the stadion start burning and explode partially, debris fall everywhere and hit the Ashigaru. Nonon jumps up scared and the clones all raise their eyebrows as they see the fireworks. Masaru is shocked by this.

"HOW IS THIS PO... !" he screams and suddenly gets a flurry of kicks into his body.

"You can fight back, you know?" Houka says cool and performs an uppercut with his legs, kicking Masaru out of the building.

"Hahaha!" the hacker laughs evil and jumps down as well. The Ashigaru and Samurai form a wall in front of Masaru as he stands up, with Houka being surrounded by his henchmen, until Nonon appears from the sky, starting a barrage of echoes and sound waves to stun their opponents and finally helping Houka get out of his situation.

"You crazy, man!? You just destroyed half of the stadium! How the hell did you do that?!" Nonon yells at Houka as she flies him back to the clones.

"I just typed it in." Houka answers and lands behind the clones again. Both friends can see Masaru approaching them.

"There he is." Nonon notices and storms at Masaru who hits her in the air with Life Fibers he's wielding, similar to whips. Houka helps Nonon and hits Masaru once more with a few kicks, yet Masaru is able to grab Houka to hit him several times with his fist, destroying the glasses the man wears. Just as Masaru tries to choke Houka with Life Fibers, Nonon grabs Masaru from behind and hits the back of his head with her guitar.

"Get off of him, you dickhead!" Nonon yells. Masaru slams his fist into Nonon's face, Nonon punches him back, then she kicks his legs away and grabs Houka to help him up.

"Clones!" Nonon orders, and so, the clones start playing their music towards Masaru, holding him off from attacking Houka and Nonon.

"I can see an exit, Nonon!"

"How?!"

"This... I can't explain it, but I see the world... different, right now, I... WOAHH" and so, Nonon grabs him.

"Actually I don't care, where do we go!?" Nonon then asks and collects her clones. Houka points at an destroyed part of the stadium

that leads to an exit door, which he can see due to the power circuits being active there. Nonon starts flying into that direction.

"The hell am I doing here!? Flying around with a data greedy clown that obliterates an entire stadium because why not!?" she wonders sarcastic.

"I thought that's why you like me!"

"YOU DON'T NEED TO DESTROY A STADIUM THOUGH!"

"I'll keep it in mind when we are trying to survive, Miss Jakuzure!" Houka answers as Nonon and Houka fly through the exit. They both enter guest halls with merchandise shops and food booths, while under them, Ashigaru and Samurai flee panickly. The Nudist Beach members find a large gate that leads out of the stadium and fly through it, yet they hear a weird sound behind them, and as Houka turns around, it's Masaru, actually capable of flying. Masaru hunts them down in the sky as Nonon and Houka fly up.

"This guy won't let us alone!"

"I'm working on it!"

Houka see's how Masaru comes dangerously close and notices that the legs on Masaru have transformed into a shape similar to Senketsu Shippu, yet a bit more round and less angular. As he tries to defeat Masaru by typing command lines while Nonon holds him, Masaru actually goes for Nonon and attacks her back, hitting her.

"Where are you going?!" Masaru yells and grabs Nonon's hair. Nonon screams by that and almost let's Houka fall, yet Houka is able to grab her leg in the last moment, now hanging on her. Masaru powers up by the Life Fibers inside his uniform and slams Nonon against the top of a skyscraper, hundreds of meters above the ground, letting her and Houka slam onto the peak of it and then falling onto the roof. Nonon coughs blood as she lands, Houka feels dizzy, yet he see's how Masaru attacks Nonon by kicking her face.

Nonon tries to stand up and attacks him, but Masaru dodges and slashes Nonon's right shoulder and arm open with Life Fibers, making her bleed.

"AH YOU STUPID ASSHOLE!" she screams and gets kicked into the face again, until Houka jumps at Masaru's back, letting him fall down. Both men attack each other brutally, and as Masaru gets the upper hand, Nonon spits out the mouth in her blood and starts playing music with her guitar, hitting Masaru, slamming him into a wall.

(AN: Last time changing! Time for the final battle! Go back to YouTube and type in "KILL la KILL IF Houka Inumuta Final Round Theme" and listen while reading! =))

"Careful now, Yamamoto." Houka threatens evil and gets ready.

"What is wrong, Inumuta, are you losing your nerves?!" Masaru provokes. Around the skyscraper, Houka still see's the world only as binary codes, download bars, literally everything you could connect with the digital world. Houka attacks with his legs while he types down commands on his keyboard, and this works rather well, as Masaru is unable to properly dodge because of Nonon's music.

"OH WOULD THIS HORRIBLE MUSIC STOP PLAYING ALREADY YOU ANNOYING IDIOTS!?" the administrator screams and attacks Nonon, who is saved by Houka as he kicks Masaru away. Houka continues typing.

"You are incredibly annoying, Inumuta!"

"Am I, Yamamoto?"

"Shut it! The director will find you and your friends, no matter if you defeat me here or not!"

"I can hear you doubting yourself."

"Whatever, wannabe hacker!" Masaru yells and attacks Houka, yet suddenly, he is unable to move!

"WHAT THE!?" he screams. His uniform is starting to overheat. Houka grins evil.

"THE HELL DID YOU DO!? WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING!?"

"I know your weaknesses." Houka answers and types down more and more commands. Masaru tries to stop the overheating yet as he seems to find a solution, Houka types one last counter command that results into another satisfying and ironic voice.

WHY NOT TRY CHANGING

"It's OVER now!" Houka yells. Masaru explodes and flies into the air. As he flies up, his uniform explodes more and more, with Nonon using her advantage to stand up, holding her guitar up into the sky until Masaru is nothing more than a little dot in the air. Eventually, Masaru falls down again, and as he does, Nonon catches Masaru with her sounds and slams her guitar against the man once in range, making him hurl to Houka who finishes the administrator off with a heavy dropkick even Nonon can feel just by purely seeing it. Masaru slams into the elevator room, Nonon then activates the elevator and lets him go down back into the first floor after his uniform entirely is destroyed, making him naked.

"CURSE YOU, YOU..." they can hear until the elevator is away. Houka removes the sweat on his face with his hand and turns to Nonon who is still bleeding.

"Let me help you." Houka says worried as his vision slowly goes back to normal. Nonon lays down her guitar and sits down as Houka strips off a part of his uniform to bandage her wounds.

"This son of a..." Nonon mumbles annoyed. Houka's Impulse Regalia turns into the normal state again. Sirens are audible. Houka's friend looks horrible. Masaru really seem to be dangerous

once he gets angry. She takes a look at the stadium. It's burning, but up here, it's rather quiet, and the snow makes for a somewhat comfortable feeling, well... to an extent.

"... they really made an corporate fortress out of this city."

"Indeed they did, yes. I need to find out how to stop the Life Fiber production. So, it is Honnouji-Academy indeed... I did had the assumption already, but them sending all the Life Fibers there... hm... I wonder what the Director wants to do with them."

"Mhm..."

"Satsuki is going to be furious when she hears about that."

"Satsuki... has worse problems at the moment."

"I know, I'm afraid something is wrong with Ryuko."

"Yeah..."

"She didn't told me, but I am not stupid. Her sister seriously needs a cure. I need to focus my efforts on that at the moment."

"You are right."

"Iori and Harime can help me, I need to ask them." Houka continues. Nonon simply watches the city. It somehow looks nice from up here. Once Houka is done bandaging Nonon's wound, he looks down to the city as well.

"Kinda nice here." Nonon thinks and grins even if her wounds still pains. Houka chuckles slightly.

"You seem to like watching burning stadiums?"

"Sure as hell do with a friend."

"It does make it more exciting."

"You and your dry answers always."

"That's how you annoy people that like to annoy other people."
Houka grins.

"Oh shut up you jerk, I'm not annoying anyone, I'm enlightening people's ears with my heavenly music."

"Enlightening them to change their taste in music entirely?"

"It worked with you so, yeah." she smiles.

"You sure about that?"

"Pfft... you joker." Nonon grins. Both continue to watch the city some more before finally leaving the place...

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AN: Thanks for reading once again! Like I said, the next chapter won't take as long as the last two ones since I don't have school luckily! :) If you read the chapter while listening to the music during the battle, PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE let me know what you think! I love to include music into stories, I always hear them myself when I write them down! I think it just makes it more fun! And of course, I'm super curious to know what you guys think now that our favourite Life Fiber Woman and Psychopath found out about Senketsu. :D The next chapter's gonna be REALLY exciting and focused on Ryuko again! See y'all next time then! :)

Breaking Hearts Apart, One By One

AN: Hello! A new chapter is out! I sadly got sick over the holidays so I couldn't drop two chapters, but I think you will like this chapter. It's a very important one and has some very hard parts to chew this time, but I'll tell you know, from here on, it's only getting heavier until we reach the final battle. I mean, it's not like there won't be any nice things happening anymore, don't worry, but I want you guys to know that this is getting into a little more horror like direction - although I don't want to leave KILL la KILLS roots, but you know... I'm trying to make things look a bit more interesting to emphasize the seriousness of the situation. And you will see this really well today. Also, for those who want to listen to music, I suggest you open up YouTube if you read on your Laptop/Computer, cause there's gonna be a few tracks again. ^^ Alright, now have fun with the chapter! :)

A strong wind howls. High up on top of the Omine mountain stands Satsuki with her sword Bakuzan, overseeing Japan. Her long hair is moved by the wind to the right side, yet her face is clearly visible, and with impressive resolve, she watches over her home.

"This world belongs to humanity. As long as I live, no Life Fiber will destroy it. This is my destiny. My purpose. The wish I promised my father to fulfill." she rethinks. Then, she hears clear, noble steps behind her. It's her mother Ragyo.

"And yet you'll never be able to fully escape the Life Fibers, my stubborn daughter."

"..."

"Is it not... ridiculous? Satsuki..." Ragyo reacts disappointed and walks next to Satsuki who does not honor her mother a single view, while Ragyo herself looks around rather satisfied but still sinister over Japan. Ragyo raises her arms, and slowly, the world forms. The

howling wind turns stormy, and soon, the clouds in the sky become dark, and red smoke clouds rise up on Japan.

"You will never learn it, I fear. It is a cruel fact that Life Fibers are part of your life."

"A part of my life I am able to cut through."

"Then... why haven't you killed both of your sisters?" Ragyo asks curious, while Japan slowly corrupts into a sad and dead place, with Life Fibers everywhere. Ragyo walks in front of Satsuki and looks into her eyes.

"Then... why is Ryuko still alive?"

"..."

"Why is Nui still alive?"

"..."

"You dislike the thought. You love Ryuko, yet you know she is the thing you wish to destroy."

"Nonsense."

"And even though you are disgusted by Nui, you know exactly she has been brainwashed by me."

"She was weak to believe your words."

The clouds slowly turn red. An incredibly huge Life Fiber monstrosity appears - something like an primordial Life Fiber, but... bigger, chaotic, with Life Fibers that leave the large thing like lightnings, as if this monstrosity is instable. The wind turns stronger. Ragyo walks a few steps to the left to reveal the "new" Japan to Satsuki. Down there, she can see Ryuko and Nui fighting a bloody battle that both will lose, and Nudist Beach members fighting against thousands of Life Fiber beings. Nonon has died. Sanageyama is badly wounded.

Houka corrupted by the Life Fibers. And Gamagoori... broken. A lightning in the sky appears. Rain falls, and fire appears.

"Why are they still alive?"

"I... wont kill Ryuko."

"And Nui?"

"She's... a monster, just like you."

"How one dimensional, but I understand. The world is, after all, painted in black and white. All Life Fibers are evil. All humans are good. Yet it have been the Life Fibers that achieved your temporary win. You required an army of children and students in clothes, a Kamui you believed to control, fortunate incidents, the death of your weak father, and in the end, you needed the help of your sister..."

"..."

"Is it not contradicting?" she asks. Another lightning appears which blinds Satsuki briefly. Ten seconds later, she opens her eyes again. The entire environment burns, has been corrupted by Life Fibers, or is totally deserted. Life Fiber Beings attack humans. The rain, combined with the storm, has turned into a nightmare. Ryuko lies there, dead, cut into two halves by the broken scissor blades, and Nui, who has totally lost her mind, just laughing uncontrollably, tormented and lonely. Ragyo smiles as she watches the scene.

"This is the future that awaits you and humanity. A burning world in which a new civilization will rise up, like a phoenix. Evolution, my child..."

Satsuki bites her teeth together.

"Evolution cannot be stopped."

Suddenly the natural hazards Satsuki experiences become unbelievably strong and heavy, so heavy that she loses Bakuzan.

Sparkles fly around her, the rain drops start hurting her, the clouds have turned black, and then, Satsuki is blown away by the wind, falling down the entire mountain, onto the destroyed Japan and its thousands of battlefields, eventually falling into a pit of mud. Satsuki looks up and kneels with tears in her eyes, helpless, and broken.

"You could have saved them. All of them." her father Soichiro says.

"Father... I..."

"You failed."

"Father, please, I..."

"And it's your fault!" he yells!

"THIS IS NOT TRUE! IT'S NOT MY FAULT!" Satsuki screams furious and stands up. It's 3 AM. She starts whimpering scared.

"This... is not true, I have not failed the world, I... I... I did it once, I can do it again, I..." she mumbles. Sanageyama opens the door. Satsuki takes a deep breath several times in her bed which feels so cold and empty all of a sudden.

"Fuck, man..." Sanageyama reacts worried and walks into her room, closing the door and then sitting onto her bed. Satsuki is completely exhausted, her face is empty, and her skin is cold. The man watches Satsuki calm as she realizes Sanageyama entered her room, and when she does, she sighs.

"... it was yet another nightmare."

"What was it this time?"

"I... saw mother. Ryuko. And... I saw my dead... and my father. I stood there high on the mountain and watched down to Japan until it suddenly turned into... something you could compare with hell, probably. Ryuko laid there, dead next to an insane Harime. Fire, rain and wind caused destruction, and at the end of the dream, my father

appeared. He was disappointed of me... I want these nightmares to end, Uzu."

"I gotcha. I luckily don't suffer from that shit but I do have dreams that I rather forget too. Lots of family stuff to be honest."

"Hm..."

"But in the end I won't bring myself down cause of an stupid projection of my head. My senses are sharpened, for years. And I know exactly you won't be brought down by your nightmares either."

Satsuki sighs and nods slowly.

"I have the feeling that you and Ryuko spend not enough time with each other. You sometimes appear rather uncomfortable. Even with Iori and Harime you seem to feel more safe."

"... I'm just worried about her, she... she might die."

"The hell you mean by that?"

"This disgusting pig, the director, he... slowly kills her with the Kamui. I should tell it Ryuko, but if I do it now, she'll be devastated. On the other hand she mustn't find it out... if I tell it her now, she will wonder why I haven't told her it earlier. Uzu, I don't know what I should do anymore. My whole life I was able to prepare myself, I knew what to do against my mother and her henchmen, but now I... feel lost."

"You ain't lost, you're just worried of your sis, that's cool. You can really see that she's having a hard time, but our computer freak is working on a solution, and Iori does too. And you got a damn lot of friends who can help you out. Everything's gonna be good again." Sanageyama answers and stands up. Then he looks down to Satsuki who seems to be a bit more calm again.

"Besides, Ryuko's a tough one. No one kills her just like that. And shit... a woman like her can get too aggressive to die, that scares even me." Sanageyama grins.

"... heh, yes." Satsuki reacts with a very brief and light smile. Sanageyama walks back to the door.

"In my opinion you need to take a break and do some fun stuff with her, I don't know what you women usually do, but you'll figure something out, and if not, I'm always down for some training. Have a good one now, Satsuki."

"You too." Satsuki answers. Sanageyama closes the door, and so, Satsuki lays down slowly and starts sleeping again.

...

The next day...

...

Neo-REVOCS transporter drive through the area and leave behind a smoke cloud. The units of the director travel through deep forests and hills. A helicopter follows them as well, and in the distance, there is a little village a few kilometers away from a city which the units of the director steer to...

...

"Ah, ouch!" Senketsu mumbles as Iori works on him. Ryuko sits next to them in a red shirt in the workshop, while Hoomaru is in the background, crocheting relaxed. Nonon and her musician clones are practicing in the main halls next to the workshop.

"Apologies." Iori answers calm and pulls out a needle out of Senketsu.

"How strange..." he continues.

"Strange?" Senketsu asks.

"It's... interesting, your... fiber structure is perfectly sewn for Ryuko just like before, but for some reason... you still seem to be not one hundred percent compatible on her, or... it is actually very hard to explain. I never saw something like this, I can only... theorize."

"Man, for real now?" Ryuko asks.

"For real," yes. Your symptoms seem to be Senketu's... "fault" would be unfair, but Senketsu caused them."

"And if I stop wearing him? Will it be better?"

"I don't know. You'd have to try it out. It possibly could be enough if you just wear him during operations, but other than that? I'm afraid you'd have to leave him in your room."

"Oh man..." Ryuko sighs. Senketsu looks disappointed to the ground, and notices Nui entering the workshop.

"Hey, my favorite jokers of all time, how's it going?! Oooh, are we playing with poor Kamui's?" Nui grins but as she notices Ryuko sitting next to Senketsu, you can see a brief light of regret in her face and then, she quickly looks to Hoomaru.

"Aha, Hoomaru! Crocheting once again? You should worry about what you are capable of and what not, because I see A LoooOOOOOoooot of mistakes!"

"Whatever, Harime." Hoomaru whispers to herself annoyed.

"Harime could take a look at your Kamui." Iori suggests. Ryuko and Senketsu both make huge eyes as they look at Nui, making a big and happy smile.

"Haha! I'd rather let Gamagoori work on Senketsu than let this freak work on him!" Ryuko reacts angry.

"She does know more about Life Fibers than I do, and based on what I've seen, she handles them far better than I ever could."

"No chance."

"Nwaaa! lori, I think it's super great of you that you actually admit you are inferior to me! If I would have known you and I would come along so great I would have asked you years ago if you would like to join my little Fashion Empire!" Nui smiles and pats lori's hair.

"Oooh, that hair actually feels pretty sweet! Good boy." Nui chuckles and then continues working at her desk.

"Well... if Harime is not an option, then..." lori mumbles quiet and grabs Senketsu carefully, pulling out a large needle which scares Ryuko as she has an anxiety towards needles. lori continues working on Senketsu to find the corrupted Entity Fiber Ichiro talked about, of which Ryuko is not aware of. For several minutes, lori searches after the Fiber, while Nui sums quiet melodies and Gamagoori visiting the room every once in a while as he needs to transport some goods. Finally, Satsuki enters the workshop and watches lori who can only shake his head after all the investigation.

"I can't believe it. I can't find a single issue. It's as if nothing is wrong with your Kamui, that can't be! I need to talk with Houka."

"So like... are you searching for something specific?" Ryuko asks confused.

"I'm searching for something like a corrupted Fiber or something similar. Satsuki and I had the assumption your Kamui has an "defect," meaning it doesn't work properly which would then be the reason why you are constantly bleeding."

"... will this kill me?" Ryuko asks direct. Suddenly, everyone in the hall becomes quiet and look Ryuko - Hoomaru and Nui as well. Ryuko raises her eyebrows in disbelief.

"You jokin, do you?"

"It's... something that could happen, yes." Iori answers hesitant and clears his throat. Satsuki looks at Ryuko resolved.

"But you won't die, Ryuko. I won't let that happen. I don't know how all of this happened and if Senketsu truly is the root of the problem - even if the chance is high - but we will find a way, and quick, you know that." her big sister reacts.

"Ryuko..." Senketsu mumbles.

"I don't want to die... that's all." Ryuko answers painful. Nui sharpens her ears and nods slowly.

"You wouldn't be the only one who thinks like that, my dear..." Nui quietly comments to herself. Satsuki hugs Ryuko.

"Who would want that anyway?"

"It just scares me." Ryuko continues. Nui sighs and stands up, leaving the room without a comment, passing by Gamagoori, who looks at her slightly perplexed. Ryuko and Satsuki didn't notice her leaving, Hoomaru did however and decides to follow the troublemaker.

"I know. I won't let anything happen to you, okay?" Satsuki smiles to cheer Ryuko up. Senketsu hugs Ryuko as well. The young woman takes a deep breath.

"You know, Ryuko, I've spoken with Sanageyama and I think we both need to take a day or two off to have some fun. I think he is right..." Satsuki mentions. Ryuko shrugs her shoulders.

"It's... kinda hard to think of fun when you know you could start coughing blood and feeling like shit at any moment to cause a huge mess."

"But you cannot think of it the entire time. Otherwise you will break apart by that. Long time ago I only thought of revenge - and that almost cost me my own humanity."

"... I suppose you're right."

"Mhm. If you want we could visit the cinema this evening. I think the movie we wanted to watch is still available to watch. Or we'll do something else, Ôsaka is a large city after all."

"... aight." Ryuko answers.

...

"Hmpf. You visiting the cinema will have to wait sadly. You wouldn't want your little friend to be hurt, would you, Matoi?" Ichiro chuckles while he's sitting in the helicopter, watching Ryuko via Senketsu.

"Director, we are arriving at your desired destination soon." a pilot says.

"Take some time to arrive. Nudist Beach is allowed to find out what we are planning. Disturb their signals or whatever you guys think would fit, it's not like I'm a tech freak, I just want them to meet us."

"As you wish..."

...

Kiryuin-Manor. Rain falls outside, and thunders are ringing out. It's concerningly stormy today. Inside however, it's dead quiet, and you can really notice that. Every once in a while, you hear a few clear steps. Light heel clicks, especially in the lower halls of the manor, inaccessible for normal people.

"Where are we going, Lady Ragyo?" Nui asks curious. Ragyo appears excited, while she and her creation walk through the deep halls of the manor.

"We will visit the place you would call "home" the most."

"Home?" Nui asks curious.

"Mhm."

"What are we going to do there? Are we going to play?"

"Later, yes. You've been there many years ago, but you can't remember that anymore."

"Ooooooh. It was boring then!"

"Boring" is the wrong word. You will see, it will be fun. Your lovely personality has it's roots there, you know?"

"Wow! How great!"

"I personally made sure you become the person you are today. A magical, young woman. But of course, that had a price."

"How much?" Nui asks jokingly. Ragyo briefly smiles.

"No money. Something different." Ragyo reacts. Slowly, the gates in front of them open, revealing a large, dome-like hall, in which Life Fibers crawl at the walls, and in the center of it, there is the giant primordial Life Fiber, from which new Life Fibers regenerate. Nui looks happy, but only moves forward a few steps to stay with her mentor.

"You've been born here. You might remember a few things from your... "former" life, as a Life Fiber."

"It's so beautiful! So many of us! So many of me! They all know me! Lady Ragyo, they all know me! They sing for me! Do you understand what they are saying?!" Nui asks with large eyes and an even larger mouth, completely amazed by her fellow Life Fibers.

"I do, yes. The Life Fibers chose you to serve me. Nine months, you were carried inside a womb, just like a normal human, and when you came to this world, you were just a little baby I was obliged to raise to the young woman you have become now. This place will always be your haven... and every place in which the Life Fibers reside. All of them love you. All of them listen to you. You are not an ordinary being. You... are superior." Ragyo explains. The melodies the Life Fibers sing in the background are quiet, but magical, and beautiful. Nui smiles about that.

"When the time has come, this world will turn into a large cocoon for your species, and I will rise up into a higher life form, chosen to be worn by clothing, and it will be glorious..." Ragyo continues and moves her hands around her entire body, starting with the breast area. Nui just looks at the primordial Life Fiber.

"So all of these dumb humans will finally die?"

"They will be consumed by the Life Fibers, yes."

"Haha! That's funny!"

"And you, my dear..." Ragyo smiles and walks towards Nui. Nui turns to Ragyo who... took her... clothes off. Nui raises her eyebrows confused and unsure what Ragyo is trying to do now.

"... you will sew a piece of clothing for me that will fully show the love you feel towards me and the Life Fibers..." Ragyo smiles and touches Nui's cheeks.

"... even if you have to take your own life for our destiny..."

"Lady... Ragyo?"

"Come, my dear..." Ragyo continues and touches Nui's body entirely. The young, sixteen year old woman does not know what Ragyo is trying to do, even if it does feel nice.

Knock, knock, knock!

"Nui?" Hoomaru says. Nui jumps up briefly by that and opens the door to her room.

"Oh. Look at you..." Nui reacts minorly surprised.

"You seem annoyed, Nui." Hoomaru notices. Nui seems a bit... cold.

"Oh, do I?" she smiles.

"Save your smiling, Nui. At this point you only do it because of your mother."

"Pffft, blah blah blah."

"What bothers you? You left when Ryuko said she would be afraid of dying." Hoomaru asks. Nui doesn't answer. She just smiles.

"Hm. I suppose I just made something up then." Hoomaru provokes to get an answer and shrugs, leaving Nui behind, who then walks outside of the room to call Hoomaru.

"No, wait. Hoomaru?" Nui asks. Hoomaru turns around and walks back to Nui again.

"Why does Satsuki comfort Ryuko about death but not me? Satsuki and I know each other much longer!"

"... you... aren't making it easy for her to like you, I'm afraid."

"But I AM doing everything I can so that she likes me!"

"You cannot achieve a goal like that by constantly insulting and provoking other people. No human wants to be treated like trash. That counts for me as well."

"But humans are trash, aren't they?! Lady Ragyo told me they were! Besides, this ain't about you, you silly?"

"Mhm, exactly."

"What's with that sarcasm? Gosh you are really weird, Hoomaru! And plain ol' me is such a doofus to really talk with you! Ugh."

"You chose to talk with me when we met each other."

"Blah blah blah, talk with someone else, go away."

"Is that your way to express love?" Hoomaru asks. Nui shows her tongue.

"Fine. I've heard several times how much you would be happy if you had someone to talk, then you have someone to talk and it's not right either. I can't help you... and with a behaviour like that, I don't want to help anyway. You live in an illusion, Nui, and I hope for you that you will realize it one day, because if not, you will suffer from the very thing that keeps you up every night." Hoomaru comments annoyed. Nui suddenly closes the door.

"Stupid Hoomaru. Why does she not understand?" Nui mumbles...

...

In the meantime, Houka works focused on his Laptop, trying to breach through the security systems of the factories in which Life Fibers are still produced. Now that they know where the Life Fibers are brought to, all Nudist Beach has to find out now is how they are produced - with that knowledge, they will be able to expose Neo-REVOCS to the public. Tsumugu in the meantime watches the map of Japan, investigating certain areas with high Neo-REVOCS presence, while Mikisugi and Sanageyama sit in the background, talking a bit.

"... and I honestly got tired of being at home, really. I don't know man, I... it didn't felt like home anymore. Everytime I entered the doors, I wondered "The fuck you doing here?"

"I understand, Uzu. When I turned 16, I left my home and got around a lot. I wanted to feel freedom and walk my own path, but after... hm, I think it was three or four years, I went back. When my mom and dad saw me, they cried... and so did I. I really hurted them, but they understood why I did it. Before, they often pressured me, ironically, they wanted me to actually become a teacher, hence why I attended Honnouji as one, but that was never really what I want. So I left."

"And what did you do during that time?"

"Travelled around Japan, tried everything out. I wanted to discover the country. Funny enough, that's how I got into nudity because one day I found myself in the Dotonbori district." Mikisugi grins.

"Haha, shit..."

"I loved it, honestly, but this god forsaken name DTR... hell no." Mikisugi says loud, which Tsumugu reacts to with a sinister, very slight and brief smile.

"Never gets boring with you." Tsumugu answers.

"In any case, Uzu. I'd say you do what Ira told you. Give your family a second chance. You'll regret it your entire life if you don't. I'm glad that I went back. That's how I knew I always had a home to go back to whenever I felt left alone. You know, you're not the only person who feels like that here."

Sanageyama thinks and rubs his hand onto his right cheek.

"... am I?"

"Mhm. There are... other people, who feel alone too. Nudity unites us, but some here... you know."

"Yeah. Was it difficult for you to go back?"

"Sure, it was. But trust me: do it, Uzu. I think your family will be proud to see what a man you became." Mikisugi cheers up.

"For a constantly naked man with stylish black jacket you really are good to talk with." Sanageyama grins. Mikisugi laughs.

"Say again?" the Nudist Beach boss grins. Houka leans back onto his chair and holds his arms behind his head while he waits satisfied.

"Ahh. Now we have to wait a few hours up to a day and I got every factory in Japan that belongs to Neo-REVOCS open. When we find out how Neo-REVOCS produces Life Fibers, we can try to develop a tool that negates the production, as well as exposing them to the public of course." Houka explains satisfied and sips from the european tea Satsuki brought, until suddenly an extremely large red dot appears on the screen, causing Houka to cough and jump up. Tsumugu looks suspicious, Mikisugi and Sanageyama take a look at the monitor as well.

"Oh no..." Mikisugi mumbles.

"Neo-REVOCS distorts our signal. Ain't that the village of Matoi's little friend?"

"It is." Houka reacts to Tsumugu's question.

"Ah crap..." Sanageyama mumbles...

...

"And don't you forget to clean the kitchen later, unless you want 19 instead of 20 croquettes this evening, alright, Mako?" Sukuyo yells to Mako who is in her room, taking a look at a few photos she made. Mako smiles.

"Yes, mum!" Mako smiles and removes the hair in her face. She then carefully lays down the camera onto the desk to walk into the kitchen, until her brother Mataro appears in the hallway with a slightly concerned face.

"Did you saw these cars outside, Mako?"

"Cars?"

"There are these weird red transporters of this REVOCS corporation!"

"What?" she reacts confused and passes by her little brother.

"Mako? Where are you?" Sukuyo yells again.

"Give me a few minutes, mum, I need to take a look outside!" Sukuyos daughter answers worried and enters the street outside the house, wearing her usual clothes and a scarf. As she looks around, she see's dozens of Neo-REVOCS Ashigaru that seem to investigate the area. Mako advances to the village while noticing a helicopter flying over the village.

"What is going on here...?" Mako wonders surprised and walks down to the plaza of the little location. Here and there are confused civilians that are being investigated by Samurai and Ashigaru, as if they would search for someone. She also notices a strange fog that slowly spreads throughout the village, but it does not seem natural. Walking between the people, Mako tries to take a look at the men.

"What are they doing here?"

"Who is that?"

"What is Neo-REVOCS doing here?"

"Are they looking for someone?"

"These are all things Mako can hear. Neo-REVOCS' arrival cannot mean anything good, that is certain, and no matter where she looks at, there is either an Ashigaru or Samurai, watching the area. Due to that, Mako quickly walks back to her home, with a hectic step, as she gets the feeling they are looking for her and her family, while seeing how a part of Neo-REVOCS units seem to hide in the forests and

houses. Arriving at her house, she notices snow that entered the hallway. Someone has visited them. Was it a Samurai?

"Hello?" Mako yells and walks through the hallway. Large snow steps are visible, and apparently, they do not belong to a Samurai or Ashigaru. And then she enters the kitchen, seeing her entire family, paralyzed and scared by the man that leads Neo-REVOCS, who turns around with a sinister smile, looking at Mako.

"Director Ichiro Harime of the Neo-REVOCS corporation, pleased to meet you, Mako Mankanshoku." Ichiro reacts with a calm voice, trimming the bowtie on his head...

...

Some time later...

...

"Ryuko?" Satsuki asks. Ryuko moved her head down while she, Satsuki, Nui, Nonon and Sanageyama make their way to the village in which Mako lives. Nui plays with a few Life Fibers she drew out of her little finger, while Nonon and Sanageyama sit at the drivers and passengers seat. The three other women are in a little storage room of a transporter Nudist Beach has covered as civilian truck. There is enough space to walk around a bit. Satsuki stands up and takes a look at the map of the village which is updated in real time thanks to Houka who got access to one of the satellites moving around earth, revealing the area. No civilian is left on the streets. Have they all been sent away? Senketsu watches how a clone falls out of Nui's pocket. The clone rolls to Ryuko, then wakes up and looks up to her big friend with a kind smile, waving and then winking with the one eye that is left. Ryuko sighs bored.

"We're here now, girls." Sanageyama mentions to the three women.

Then, Nui grabs her clone with a few Life Fiber strings and pulls it back to her, while said clone looks at Ryuko and Senketsu with a

huge eye, laughing, as if it would tickle the clone when it's dragged by Life Fibers.

"How strange... no units." Satsuki wonders quiet.

"Eh, it's a trap anyway, Satsuki, and you know that!" Nui smiles.

"Obviously." Satsuki answers. Nui stands up and fills her vest pockets with ammo for her weapon.

"But at least we can prepare ourselves for some fun, and that is all that counts, right, my dear?" Nui asks.

"Indeed. I want you to examine the area around the village, while Ryuko and I will take a closer look at the location itself."

"Would you also like a tea?"

"Save your jokes for another time."

Nui simply shows her tongue and chuckles. Then she turns to Ryuko who closed her arms.

"Nwa, Ryuko, now don't be like that, I bet your friend Mako is..."

"Shut up."

"Harime." Satsuki says in a cold, but threatening voice. Nui rolls her eyes, as if she does not understand why both Ryuko and Satsuki behave the way they do. Aren't they just some harmless, mean jokes? Isn't that how you express love? Well.

"... spoilsport." Nui whispers to herself. The truck stops, Satsuki and Nui leave it first via a ramp, with Nonon and Sanageyama following and Ryuko leaving the truck as last person. A strange fog has spread around the village. The buildings here seem rather old from the looks of it. Sanageyama and Nonon look around and split up from Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui. Sanageyama carefully holds his sword ready. Nui also splits up and enters the forests around the village, leaving

Ryuko and Satsuki the only ones in the village, while Satsuki's Four deva friends take a look at the streets and the entrances to the village.

Everything here is deserted. Snow falls. Market booths have been destroyed. Windows and doors slammed open. And the library seems ravaged - Neo-REVOCS probably did not intend to destroy or burn books, but it points out that they had to deal with the citizens there. Ryuko stops walking.

"Mako and I were here once." she mumbles.

"What did they do out of this village?" Senketsu wonders curious.

"They just ravaged it..." Ryuko continues to mumble. Satsuki breathes in and out once, deeply, to concentrate. It's ice cold here, and you can see your own breathe here. Nui in the meantime walks through the forests, speaking with herself.

"Do that, Harime! Do this, Harime! Pfft, just because you got the same name like Mama it doesn't mean you can command me! Ahhhh, Satsuki, you and your superiority complexes, I missed them so much! It's soooo fun talking with you! But now I am talking with myself. That is also fun. I suppose." Nui talks with herself. She suddenly see's a deer running through the forest which she briefly aims at out of reflex. As she watches the deer jump away, she lowers her weapon again.

"Uuuhhh, super scary! What's next, a ghost? A page to collect?" Nui yells.

"Scary?" she suddenly hears behind her, turning around with her rifle. No one is there. The voice was female though and reminded heavily of Lady Ragyo.

"Mama!?" Nui yells and looks around.

Ryuko and Satsuki meanwhile continue to examine the village. Clothes have been torn apart, posters and other objects lay on the ground. The snow steps prove that Neo-REVOCS apparently got hostile towards the people here after a short time to gain control over the village. Both sisters find a Neo-REVOCS transporter which they open. In it is a Samurai, who... is dead? Satsuki grabs the dead Samurai and removes his helmet. His mouth is widely open, and the last face expression he made was a shocked one. Whatever happened, he certainly hasn't died due to violence. Physical violence, at least.

"Something had to cause a heart attack on him, probably." Senketsu thinks.

"Might be." Satsuki answers.

"I've seen a few dead people here and there too. This is so fucked up. I gotta find Mako." Ryuko says and stands up, walking straight to the path that leads to Mako's home. Satsuki tries to follow Ryuko, but due to Ryuko's quick step, she loses her in the fog. Satsuki finds herself back in said fog more or less.

sigh "Ryuko..."

Satsuki tries to follow Ryuko's steps, however, this attempt turns out to be difficult due to the fog and the many different shoes and steps other people marked the ground with. The wind gets stronger, and suddenly, a window breaks apart, with an object falling out of it's house. The woman takes a look - it's a portrait of her and her mother...

"... could be the fog... does it increase the effectiveness of the sickness?" Satsuki realizes...

...

"We're going to find Mako, right here, and right now, Senketsu! I hope she is alright!" Ryuko mumbles worried.

"Be careful, Ryuko. We can't see anything, and this fog isn't anything normal. Your blood is heating up."

"I don't care. Her house isn't far away anymore luckily." Ryuko answers stubborn and walks up a few steps. Arriving at the hill that leads to Mako's home, she steps onto a Nui clone with black arms. As she takes a look at said clone, the clone moves it's arms to the west, which leads to a path inside the forest... and to a temple.

"Shit." Ryuko reacts and pulls out the scissor blades, keeping them in her hand while they are in the shrunken state.

"Where the fuck is that bitch..." Ryuko wonders quietly.

"Ryuko?" Senketsu asks.

"..."

"Ryuko! It's not real! It has to be this fog!"

"Ain't gonna let it happen again, not this time. This has to be a nightmare which I haven't woken up of yet!" Ryuko mumbles to herself, seemingly believing she really is in a nightmare and that she would sleep right now.

"Ryuko! You need to take a step back! It was just a clone."

"Not just a clone, didn't you saw it's arms?! How it pointed at this path!?"

"There were no black arms! It was just a clone!"

"Not you too, Senketsu." Ryuko mumbles in disbelief, quickly running up the path.

"She's gonna cut Mako in half if I won't speed up!"

"What?"

"And it'll burn! Everything will burn! I can't let her do that! It's always the same shit, I'm relieving this nightmare every damn week!" Ryuko continues and runs up the temple. She often experienced this nightmare. It's just a matter of time until everything starts burning, or so she thinks. But as she arrives at the temple, there is nothing, except for blood. No dead people. No limbs. Nothing. Just blood.

"WHERE THE FUCK ARE YOU, HARIME!?" Ryuko screams.

...

"Mama!? Mama!" Nui yells worried, running pass trees and bushes until she reaches the village again, running into it where she heard another voice. It starts to rain all of a sudden. There is a path that leads to a temple from which the voice came from.

"Mama? Mama needs to be there! I knew she lives!" she thinks and hastefully runs to the path, but she falls down into the ground and lets one of her clones fall out near a few steps, but she doesn't care and simply runs up. Arriving at the temple, she see's a silhouette walking through it, but it's unclear as to what it was. Inside the temple, the silhouette walks up the stairs. Up the stairs, Life Fibers start singing around her, even though there are none, and their singing is an mean and evil one, which is about how Nui failed as the one the High Entity has chosen, reciting her oath to the Entity a long time ago. As she runs up and arrives at the top of the temple, the silhouette turns around, and it appears to be Nui herself, but as her Life Fiber form, with red-orange skin, empty and scary eyes, and twin tails, all made out of pure Life Fibers. Nui looks confused at "herself." Her copy imitates her every move, and as Nui reaches her arm out to her Life Fiber form, the Life Fiber Being suddenly drags her arm to herself and uses it's dull arms to grab around Nui's face, trying to pop out Nui's left eye. Nui defends herself and finally turns her arms into needles to cut off the Being's arms. The former Grand Couturier's eye hurts and as she blinks a few times, the Being is gone... as if it was never there. The rain is turning stronger and stronger, and down at the ground, she can hear someone yell.

"WHERE THE FUCK ARE YOU, HARIME!?" Ryuko screams. Relieved to hear Ryuko, Nui jumps down to her companion. As Nui approaches Ryuko, she notices how Senketsu's wearer starts to expand the scissor blades.

"You..."

"Ryuko?" Nui asks confused.

"I won't let you hurt Mako again. Not this time!" Ryuko yells and suddenly attacks Nui. Nui jumps to the side and holds her weapon ready.

"Hey, Ryuko! Stop it! I don't wanna play this game, this... AH!" Nui screams scared and avoids the next attack of the scissor blades.

"I knew you'd fuck us over! This was all part of your plan! YOU WANTED US TO GET HERE, BET YOU TOLD THAT FUCKER OF AN DIRECTOR WHERE MAKO LIVES WHEN YOU WENT TO REVOCS!"

"What are you talking... AH, HEY COME ON, please don't do this!" Nui reacts.

"TAKE THIS!" Ryuko screams and hits Nui with the scissor blades on her torso, causing Nui to bleed and ripping a small part of her vest open, revealing her belly. Nui takes a few steps back scared and holds her hands at the wound, visibly scared. With that hit, the rain grows even stronger, and the area around her seems to distort, reminding of the old forest around Nagoya and the Kiryuin manor.

Satsuki in the meantime walks around confused through the village, the wind has turned into almost something like a storm, with cloths and leaves flying through the area. Satsuki feels ice cold, even colder than usual. Then she hears Ryuko screaming for Nui.

"Ryuko!" Satsuki mumbles worried and runs to Ryuko's direction, taking a shortcut via a bridge that leads to the temple, but as she

enters the bridge's hallway - as it is a roofed bridge - her mother stands there, surrounded by dozens of Life Fiber Beings, all waiting for her command.

"Look at you..." Satsuki mentions.

"My child, evolution cannot be stopped, and it is your duty as human to pave a way for the Life Fibers. Bow to the rules of this universe!" Ragyo reacts ice cold and holds her right hand up in Satsuki's direction, causing the Life Fiber Beings to attack Ragyo's daughter with a horrifying speed, but what they did not expect is that Satsuki reacts with quick slash attacks of "Empress Blade" which send out blue energy waves fueled with the Life Fibers of the dead Junketsu, who became part of the blade. However, the Life Fibers are still able to hit Satsuki, and when they do, they... simply tickle her. She's not starting to bleed or anything. Satsuki however continues to fight off the hallucinations as she reminds herself that if she is hit or gets into contact with too many of these hallucinations, she will be rendered unconscious. She fights her way through the bridge, step by step, Life Fiber after Life Fiber, until her mother disappears and the path to the temple reveals. Life Fibers at the windows sing towards Satsuki in horrible voices, as if they would scream at her, or insult her. As Satsuki arrives at the temple, the hallucinations turn so heavy that the appearance of Ryuko and Nui change into their Life Fiber Forms, with Nui having her twin tails, and Ryuko having spiky hair, and each time they hit each other, Life Fiber's fall off of their horrifying bodies. The gaze is incredibly hard to watch, even for Satsuki.

Ryuko in the meantime notices Satsuki as a, by Nui Harime controlled person, with her mind stitched perfectly to obey Harime's every order. As she looks at Nui, she laughs and aims with her rifle that has been corrupted by the black arms, at Ryuko. Fire is everywhere, and heavy smoke rises up.

"You seem like you're not having a lot of fun, Ryuko, why's that?! Why can't we have fun for once?!" Nui laughs happily. Blood leaves her belly still. Ryuko jumps forward and attacks Nui with the scissor blades, however, Nui is able to dodge.

"Grr... that hurts... RYUKO STOP THIS NOW, I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT!" Nui yells scared. Satsuki arrives at the combat area. The rain is so strong that Nui needs to take out her parasol in order to use her eyes properly, as all the drops make it hard to take a look. She jumps up and flies around with her parasol, trying to escape from Ryuko, but Ryuko jumps onto her legs and drag her down again.

"Ryuko!? I'm sorry!" Senketsu says and resists Ryuko's moves, rendering his wearer unable to do anything.

"Sen... ketsu! THE FUCK YOU DOING!?" Ryuko screams.

"You are hallucinating and you will black out if you don't stop! It's like you are cooking at 500 degrees!"

"Ahahahaha! Look at you, Ryuko! Does your Kamui not want you to play with me? How unfortunate!" Nui laughs and walks away from Ryuko. Ryuko overcomes Senketsu's resistance and attacks Nui once more.

"FUCKIN' DIE ALREADY! I WANT THIS NIGHTMARE TO END!"

"Ryuko!" Senketsu yells and tries to hold her back from attacking Nui. Ryuko's vision blurs out slowly, until Life Fibers appear everywhere, and blood that runs down the walls around the area. Just as Satsuki tries to intervene, a blue smoke rises up around the temple, and then, everything becomes completely quiet. Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui are unable to move, and then, they can hear steps behind them, and finally, a slight chuckle.

"Mhm. Mhmhmhm..."

"Grr..." Satsuki bites her teeth. She tries to move her head to the right. Nui can barely stand up, and Ryuko kneels down.

"What a comedic act. Ah, I wish there would be more time." Ichiro grins in the background. The hallucinations have stopped. It's not

raining anymore in Nui's head. The fires around Ryuko have vanished. And the wind has calmed down in Satsuki's mind. They finally see everything normal again - and there is just a normal temple. At the path to the temple stands the Director, wearing a pink coat, holding his hands in the pockets.

"Harime." Ryuko mumbles evil.

"One thing I find very interesting is the human mind. It's sewn in a fairly complex fashion. You humans can process so many things at the same time, but ironically, this can also completely devastate you. I really wonder if that is a strength, or a weakness, this... emotional abilities."

"Where's Mako?!"

"Oh, Mankanshoku... I met her a few hours ago. Very naive, did fought back just like her family when they had the chance to. She is surprisingly competent in combat."

"What did you do to her?"

"Guards." Ichiro orders. Samurai appear behind him and pull up Ryuko. Ryuko is led to Ichiro, while Nui and Satsuki are brought away by the Ashigaru and Samurai that appeared from the forest.

"So your plan is to play with our minds?" Senketsu asks Ichiro while he walks down with Ryuko and a few Samurai to the home of the Mankanshokus.

"Well you could put it in a way that I play my puppet game different than my little inferior Doppelgänger. I don't need thousands of copies of myself to even out loneliness. Little Harime is pathetic. No, I personally... I do like to set little... fires... here and there... that, in their sum, will slowly lead to a huge conflagration."

"... why do I live? I thought I died. Why do I still exist?" Senketsu asks Ichiro who starts smiling.

"Wonderful question, Senketsu, you will receive a satisfying answer soon, don't worry." the Director answers and arrives at the home of the Mankanshokus with Ryuko and his henchmen. The Samurai enter the house, and briefly after, screams are audible. Ryuko bites her teeth together and tries to stay calm.

"I swear if you or your weird ass wannabe goons did anything to Mako or her family, Imma..."

"... you gonna do what? Kill me?" Ichiro asks curious. Ryuko doesn't know how to answer.

"Look how scared I am." he smiles and shakes his head, and then he makes Ryuko's hair more proper again. Ryuko tries to give Ichiro a head nut, but he quickly dodges and smiles...

...

"You seeing these idiots?" Nonon asks Sanageyama quiet as they hide behind some cover, seeing Satsuki and Nui walking through the village with the Ashigaru. Sanageyama nods.

"They are screaming for a kick in the ass."

"Their screams will be divine, if you help me."

"You can bet I'll help you. Let's see, these guys probably have Ryuko somewhere." he mentions and draws his blade, then counting the amount of hostile forces quickly.

"Nine Ashigaru, five Samurai, and one of these Couturier dudes." Sanageyama counts.

"I'll deal with these strange soldiers and you take on that cultist doofus."

"Sounds good." Sanageyama answers and stands up, slowly walking towards the guard while Nonon brings her musician clones in position.

...

"Leave us alone." Ichiro orders. The Samurai around Ichiro leave off Ryuko and form a half circle, with their backs looking at Ryuko and Ichiro. Ichiro watches Ryuko as the door to the Mankanshoku home opens again. He also takes a few steps back to leave her in peace. Ryuko carefully makes a few steps towards.

"Mako?" Ryuko asks careful. Samurai leave the building and throw out Mako to the ground, letting her fall into the cold snow. Ryuko's heart stops for a moment, and she quickly runs to her little friend. As Mako looks up, tears are visible in her face, and then, both friends look into each others eyes.

"... Mako..."

"... Ryu... ko..."

Ryuko takes a deep breath and looks around as Mako tries to slowly stand up. She's got a few little wounds, nothing concerning, but still bad to look at. Mako hugs Ryuko.

"Mako..." Ryuko mumbles painful. Senketsu warms both women up.

"You... you... really changed, did you, you..."

"I'm... photographer now..."

"... that's... really nice to hear." Ryuko answers and holds Mako tight. A few Samurai and Ichiro himself watch Ryuko patiently.

"Who are... these men?"

"REVOCS... Mako, I'll get you out of here, I promise. I'm not alone. Satsuki and... and Nui... are here too." Ryuko whispers into Mako's ear.

"... w-what?"

"Long story..."

"Director?" a Samurai asks.

"I'll give them two minutes. Let the helicopter know we can depart."

...

In the meantime, Nonons musician clones are ready for the battle. Sanageyama approaches the guards of Neo-REVOCS with the "Lightning Regalia" and speaks to them relaxed, but provoking.

"Yo, what's up you losers?" Sanageyama asks the guards who turn around to the Samurai. Satsuki and Nui therefore get time to free themselves. The fog is barely here anymore, but the snow still falls.

"You guys seem like you're just asking for a first class ticket straight back into the shadow realm."

"Who do you think you are, weakling?" the Couturier asks Sanageyama.

"I'm the guy who haunts your nightmares from now on."
Sanageyama answers and holds his blade ready for a fight.

"Nightmares... we will see about that." the Couturier answers and raises his arms, with Life Fibers leaving the robe he wears. Sanageyama simply smiles unimpressed and transforms his regalia.

LIGHTNING REGALIA

(AN: Music! If you want, you can go to YouTube and type down "Uzu Sanageyama Valor 3 Theme" and continue reading, this is what he and the others hear during this battle! :))

Sparkles leave Sanageyama's armor, in green colors and lightnings that load up his sword. As the guard make space for the Couturier to deal with Sanageyama, the musician clones start attacking and play music to incapacitate the Ashigaru and Samurai! The Couturier

however moves to Sanageyama with a dangerously high speed who on the other hand just stands there like a bastion, and as the Couturier is about to attack Sanageyama with his arms, Sanageyama suddenly disappears.

"SHINGAN-STEP! I GOT YOU NOW!" Sanageyama screams and suddenly appears from behind. His dodge was too fast for the human eye! The green Samurai attacks three times with inhuman speed and wounds the Couturier. Luckily for the group, Ichiro and his men do not hear the battle. Satsuki and Nui free themselves and make their way up to the home of the Mankanshoku's. Sanageyama in the meantime beats up the Couturier easily with quick strikes, and with every attempt to hit Sanageyama, the man uses the "Shingan-Step" to avoid being wounded. The robe is ravaged and black clothes are revealed, which seem to be very tight and uncomfortable.

"Come on, I'm not done yet!"

"You..." and then, Sanageyama hits the Couturier again who screams in an inhuman voice. Uzu's opponent tries to attack with Life Fibers, however, with quick and precise attacks, Sanageyama is able to cut off the attacking strings, and with a clean overhead jump, the Samurai hits the Couturier's head. The blade however clashes with the head.

"This ain't halloween!" Sanageyama reacts and attacks more and more, faster and faster now, with side steps, back steps, pierce attacks, everything you could imagine. The clones start attacking the Couturier as well and render him unable to move, and as there is absolutely no chance to escape anymore, Sanageyama runs at him and performs a few very methodical attacks...

"MEN!"

"DO!"

"KOTE!"

"MEN!"

"DO!"

"KOTE!"

"MEN! DO! KOTE! MEN! DO! KOTE! MEN DO KOTE! MEN DO KOTE! MEN DO KOTE MEN DO KOTE MEN DO KOTE MEN DO KOTE DO KOTE MENDOKOTEMENDOKOTEMENDOKOTE

incomprehensible screams, it's probably Men Do Kote though and finally, as last attack, Sanageyama charges an attack from below that catapults the Couturier into the air and lets his clothes explode!

"BORN IN NORTH KANTO, RAISED ON KONNYAKU!"

Sanageyama yells and puts his sword back into the sword scabbard. The clones start applauding towards Sanageyama and Nonon grins, until she realizes there is an strange amount of Life Fibers falling from the sky, and then, the Couturier itself falls from the sky and lands behind the Samurai.

"And THAT'S how you beat up a Couturier!"

(Music stops)

"Dude, turn around!" Nonon yells angry and approaches Sanageyama. Sanageyama and Nonon take a look at the Couturier.

It's a Life Fiber Being.

"Ah shit. What is this?" Sanageyama asks.

"I've seen one of these things already! They ain't a joke, Satsuki, Mikisugi and I struggled heavily against them!"

"I remember! You said something in that direction once."

"Mhm! We gotta get to Satsuki and the others, and quick!"

"It's always something new with these REVOCS weirdos!"
Sanageyama reacts. He, the clones and Nonon follow Satsuki and Nui...

...

Satsuki and Nui in the meantime are about to arrive at the home of the Mankanshokus.

"Your Doppelgänger is more perfidious than you could have ever been, Harime." Satsuki mentions.

"Yes, and that's what I hate more than Life Fibers or humans! Honestly, at this point I'm starting to think humans can't be that bad!"
Nui answers and helps Satsuki over a wall, who Nui then climbs up as well with Satsuki's help. Both get a good look at Ryuko, Mako and Ichiro, and they can hear what the three are talking about.

"Mako? Hey! What did they do?" Ryuko asks worried.

"I... well..." Mako mumbles incomprehensible. Whatever the Director did had to disturb Mako so much that she doesn't even want to talk much anymore. The view angers Ryuko and pains her even more, and when she looks at Ryuko with a murderous gaze, Ichiro simply reacts with an empathy free smile, as if nothing ever happened.

"Why are you dragging Mako into your sick game, huh? How do you know about her? Was it Nui!?"

"Aha, no, Nui is too loyal to say anything. No, you simply refuse to give up. All I want is you in the Neo-REVOCS headquarter."

"Oh really, do you?"

"Yes. Ah, my bad. I forgot that your sister never said anything."

"What?" Senketsu asks.

"Satsuki?" Ryuko asks as well.

Ichiro makes a hand gesture which causes the Samurai to enter the home.

"See, Matoi, it's pretty much this: the High Entity expects from me that I can take you and your sister Satsuki as hostage, however, I do believe I can do this in a less boring way. As you know, I like fun, fun is good, fun keeps us healthy and of course fun kills time and much more if you really insist on it. Having no fun in life only leads to boredom, and if you are bored, you cannot get any good results, and that's why I figured out a little game for you to force you."

"And so you ravaged Mako's village just to get to me?"

"No, that's simply the result of your sister being braveless enough to actually disobey me and tell you what is truly going on with you... which I, if I am allowed to say so, find to be very cruel and tasteless, isn't it so, Satsuki?" he asks Satsuki in the background. How did he knew about Satsuki now?!

"Huh!?" Ryuko wonders. Satsuki stands up quickly, with Nui throwing a trustless view at the heir of REVOCS.

"What are you doing?!" Nui asks with a confused smile.

"This pig is talking too much!" Satsuki answers and approaches the guards. Nui shakes her head and stands up. The wound on her belly still hasn't really healed yet.

"Isn't it amazing to see how long people can know each other, and they still don't have faith? No faith in the other person? No trust?" Ichiro chuckles and walks towards Ryuko, with Mako standing behind Ryuko. Ryuko notices Satsuki approaching them.

"Harime!" Satsuki yells. Ichiro does not react even if he moves his eyes to the left briefly.

"You know, if Satsuki would have participated in my little mind game, then you wouldn't be dead sick now, but healed, and then we

wouldn't stand here... and then poor little Mako wouldn't have to be hurt now."

"... what?"

"When Satsuki and I met in the Kiryuin manor a few days ago, I talked about you a bit... and even more about your Kamui. Honestly, I did not expect you to actually wear it! I thought you wouldn't be so blind and stupid but well, I suppose there's always something new to learn. On the other hand, you really love your little Kamui, he must be a good friend. Always pining for him when you had no one left, no Mako, no Satsuki, no other friends, just you, your bed, and your dreams, in which you hoped that one day you could call someone a friend again, and here we are." Ichiro grins and stares into Ryuko's eyes. Satsuki pushes the Samurai away and confronts Ichiro, and briefly after, Nui appears, aiming her weapon at Ichiro, which gives Ryuko the idea that Ichiro can't lie completely, if he lies at all.

"Don't listen to him, Ryuko! It's his plan to destroy our minds!" Satsuki pleads. Ryuko watches Ichiro.

"Your Kamui has become the very thing it should have always been. A parasite, as you humans call it, that drinks your blood, but where it protected you five years ago and warned you whenever you were about to be incapacitated... nowadays, it truly is what it always should have been. A Being that will drink your blood until your body is dry... and then, there won't be much left of the infamous Ryuko Matoi who was able to destroy Shinra Koketsu. All what will be left of you will be a few rags of dead Life Fibers, and the legacy of Isshin Matoi has ultimately failed. Yes. Your Kamui is real, but nothing else than a trap that will kill you. And your sister... she is part of the problem now. All, because she was not able to tell you all of this."

"..."

Satsuki tries to attack Ichiro, but the guards hold her back. They won't be able to resist much longer however.

"And since I have to tell you my little secret, I think it is only fair that we continue our game by adding another player, or better, an entire family, isn't it so, Miss Mankanshoku?"

"You won't hurt Mako! If you want me, fine, I'll give up, but leave Mako alone for fuck sake!"

"Oh, ah, ah, ah, sure, now you would give up, but I remember you aren't the kind of person that gives up so quick. You are rebellious, Matoi, and a rebel will surely find a way. So, Matoi... I fear our little conversation will have to end soon, and as result of your sisters unnecessary failure, I will take your friend and her family with me back to Neo-REVOCS. I fear your friends are in danger now."

"... you dirty... fucking... bastard." Ryuko reacts furious. Nui see's Nonon and Sanageyama approaching from behind. Samurai pull out Mako's entire family, and as Mataro and Sukuyo try to attack a Samurai, the Samurai punch with their iron fists back and hurt them. Ichiro pats Ryuko's hair and drags Mako to him.

"NO, RYUKO!" Mako screams and tries to bite Ichiro, yet he reacts unimpressed.

"Mako!"

"If you would have a sister that would care for you and be honest to you, then all of this wouldn't happen! Move it, Mankanshokus!" Ichiro yells and causes the Samurai to move. Ryuko gets her scissor blades ready and attacks the Samurai next to her, and with this, the battle begins, and the clones start playing music, while Nonon and Sanageyama join the fight. Nui fires at Ichiro who however dodges by moving his head slightly to the left, almost hitting Satsuki as she furiously tries to attack Ichiro.

(AN: Again, you can listen to music here if you want! Go to YouTube and type down "Satsuki Kiryuin Valor 3 Theme! :D)

"ARE YOU STUPID, SATSUKI!?" Nui screams worried and runs to Satsuki to hold her back from fighting.

"Don't you dare touching me, Harime!"

"I WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU NOW, I DON'T WANT TO... ARGH" and so, Satsuki pushes Nui away and onto the ground. Satsuki follows Ryuko.

Suddenly, a helicopter starts that is further in the forests. Nui probably would have discovered it if it wouldn't have been for the fog. Ryuko and Satsuki chase Ichiro and his men through the forest, while on top of the unit, the Mankanshokus are led with hasty step to the helicopter. Nui catches up with Nonon. While the family tries to fight back, they realize the more they resist, the more dangerous the Ashigaru appear, until one of them even draws a sword to hurt father Barazo if he dares to attack again.

"Hey, my favourite psychopath, wanna fly!?" Nonon asks Nui and catches her hearts on the neck, dragging Nui up. The psychopath does hang weird in the air but is able to shoot at the Ashigaru easily, stopping the family from moving. The Ashigaru that escort the family start shooting at Nui and Nonon who however are able to dodge their attacks, but as Ichiro notices their attempt to slow down the familie's progress to the helicopter, Ichiro summons Life Fibers into the air. The Life Fibers fly up over Nonon and Nui and explode almost like a frag grenade, hitting Nonon's back and causing her to bleed, and the remaining Life Fibers cause an evil burn. Nonon and Nui fall down, with Nui landing on the ground first and breaking her nose. As she see's Nonon fall, Nui tries to stand up and catches Nonon quickly.

"... huh, thanks, I owe you one... ah shit, that hurts." Nonon mumbles painful.

"Yeah, don't mention it." Nui answers and removes the blood on her nose.

"See, that's the only good thing as a Life Fiber, you can fall from 30 meters height and survive."

"... uh huh, I'll keep it in mind." Nonon mumbles and stands up. Nui and Nonon try to catch up again with Sanageyama, Ryuko and Satsuki. Ryuko watches how the family is entering the helicopter.

"OH GOD FREAKING DAMN IT WOULD YOU GIVE ME A DAMN BREAK ALREADY!?" Ryuko screams and turns so unbelievably mad that she activates the Decapitation mode of the scissor blades, with which she is able to cut the entire forest into two parts, even ripping apart two dozens Samurai and Ashigaru, but the range is not high enough to hit the helicopter. The Samurai all turn naked and fall into the cold snow.

"GET OVER HERE YOU BASTARD!"

"Ahahaha!" Ichiro laughs happily and throws Mako into the helicopter.

"I won't let this happen." Satsuki says to herself resolved and jumps over the freshly cut trees, making an overhead attack with her blade to summon blue waves that hit the helicopter - but it doesn't take any damage. Life Fibers seem to protect the helicopter. She quickly throws her grappling hook towards the helicopter and lands into it, however, there she meets two Couturiers. More Samurai and Ashigaru appear from the forest and attack the clones and the Nudist Beach members. Ryuko and Sanageyama still need a few more moments before they can enter the helicopter as well! Satsuki throws shock waves with her blade towards the Couturiers while the Mankanshoku family fights off Ashigaru with their fists, and especially Sukuyo and Barazo seem to do well. Satsuki's hair is suddenly dragged, then makes a 180° and is sent out of the helicopter by Ichiro with an incredibly powerful fist punch into her face.

"You are pathetic, Kiryuin, you and your entire family is! Ain't even able to help your poor sister!" Ichiro laughs and is suddenly attacked

by Mako's dog Guts. Guts crawls onto Ichiro's head and tries to bite him there. Guts' saliva flows down Ichiro's head which disgusts him, and by that, he grabs the dog and throws him towards the inner helicopter wall. Followed up, the Director summons his scythe, drags Guts back to him with Life Fibers and throws the dog onto the ground, showing the Scythe, and just as Ryuko and Sanageyama are about to attack Ichiro, the Scythe ALMOST (!) lands onto Guts.

"QUIET NOW!" Ichiro screams with an ice cold smile, causing absolutely ALL sounds to vanish, even the helicopter sounds. Nonon and Nui approach the battlefield but don't dare to do anything when they see what Ichiro could do now. Even the clones stop playing the music.

"You sad little things that do not comprehend what the Life Fibers could do for you, if you would just try to understand them. I should remove one of the Mankanshoku's family members.

That would be painful, wouldn't it, Mako?" Ichiro asks Mako ice cold who stands in the background, while he himself watches Ryuko and the others closely. The scythe is five centimeters from the poor dog away.

"WOULDN'T IT, MAKO?!" he screams grinning.

"Y-YES."

"THEN TELL YOUR FRIENDS THAT THEY WILL WITHDRAW FROM THE HELICOPTER UNLESS THEY WANT ME TO SEND YOUR WORTHLESS DOG INTO HELL."

...

...

...

"R... Ry... uko?" Mako mumbles careful behind Ichiro. Sanageyama watches Ichiro evil, Satsuki lies on the ground, with mud in her face, and two meters away from Ichiro stands Ryuko.

"... go now..."

...

"... I'm sorry, Mako."

"..."

Ryuko then takes ten steps back, until she is away from Ichiro. Ichiro then carefully puts his scythe away and lets Mako grab the dog, then he pushes her back into the helicopter.

"I'm not the evil one, Matoi. That's your sister. She knew about your incoming death, and yet she didn't do anything. You have five days to get to Neo-REVOCS - do it and your friends, and you, will survive.

Otherwise I'll kill them all. That's a promise."

...

Ichiro snips his fingers, and the sounds appear again. The helicopter starts with Mako, Ichiro and the others, without giving Ryuko and Nudist Beach the ability to follow them at all. As the helicopter disappears over the forest, the Samurai and Ashigaru also withdraw from the combat area and go back into the forest.

Ryuko, Satsuki, Nui, Sanageyama, Nonon, and the musician clones are left, and no one knows what to say. Sanageyama looks to the ground. Nonon is unsure of what to say and looks at Satsuki. Nui simply is disappointed which you can really see as she does not smile or anything, she looks rather cold and without empathy - well, that is even more obvious now, it's not like she has much empathy at all. And then, there is Satsuki, who still kneels on the ground, not even daring to look up to her sister who approaches her.

Ryuko looks at Satsuki with a gaze that does not want to be described.

The older sister tries to give an answer, it's well visible on the lips, but she can't. Ryuko puts back the scissor blades into the pocket, Senketsu transforms back into the normal form, and Ryuko leaves the area without a single word, passing by Sanageyama, Nonon and Nui. Nonon approaches Satsuki. Nui and Sanageyama look at each other, not knowing what to say now, although Nui knew about the entire thing partially, but she did not expect it to be this heavy...

Finally, Ryuko leaves the area alone, leaving her four companions...

AN: Yeah. This was hard to chew, I know. I know I don't have to apologize but I'll do it nonetheless cause I love all of you, I'm ALWAYS (!) excited to listen to your opinion on each chapter, and really, I am sorry I can't drop chapters as often as months ago! We will also soon approach one of my favorite chapters, chapter 22. You guys will love it. If you already do love the story, then I think 22-23 will be the point where I could make you cry. And I'll promise: most of you will cry at one point later on. ;) I'm not heartless though, don't worry.

Alright, that's it from me again, I wish all of you a great day or evening! Btw, if anyone of you has Discord, you can gladly add me there: DanieD00#2576. Just a little offer, I will keep you informed on updates then! ^^ Also check out the story in one or two days again, I still need to finish the chapter cover, and I think that will be a good time to also take a look at how Ichiro and Mako look like!

We'll see each other again, hopefully soon, in Chapter 17 "A Smile That Hides Tears..."

A Smile To Hide Tears

AN: Aaaaand welcome to the new chapter! We are getting closer to the darker parts of the story, be assured, there will be better times again, but for now... ah, see for yourself. I'm really glad I got home office so I can work on new chapters. :D Have fun reading!

Nudist Beach base. Houka is working on his laptop. In the meantime, Satsuki and Mikisugi sit at a table.

No one says a thing.

All they can hear besides the computers and Houka tipping on the laptop is Ryuko coughing every once in a while. Rarely there is also radio chatter. Houka clears his throat and turns around.

"Well... I overwrote a few of the factories. We... could examine them with a few units soon." Houka mentions quiet. Satsuki doesn't react. Mikisugi nods briefly. Then, Tsumugu enters the room, smoking a cigar.

"Got any idea what to do with Matoi?" Tsumugu asks and takes a draw from his cigar. Satsuki stays quiet.

"Still on it." Mikisugi answers. Tsumugu nods and sits down next to them.

"Has she spoken with Ryuko again?"

"No. After what happened in the village, Ryuko hasn't said a single word. She mostly is in her room and only goes out if she wants to get herself something to eat, a movie, or popcorn. That's all."

"Hm. And the Kamui?"

"She ain't wearing it anymore, it's just jumping around in her room. Instead, it's now her red vest with which she entered the base weeks

ago. Iori examined her again, time is running out, he said. This Director of Neo-REVOCS seems to know exactly when Ryuko is going K.O - and when that happens, the Mankanshokus are dead as well." Mikisugi continues. Satsuki stands up.

"I'll visit Nonon." Satsuki says quiet and stands up. Mikisugi and Tsumugu nod. As Satsuki walks through the Nudist Beach base, she passes by Hoomaru who's holding nice looking flowers. Seems like she wants to decorate her room. It's no surprise, Hoomaru likes nature after all, and so it makes sense that she would try to make her room look a bit more like such.

"Lady Satsuki." Hoomaru says in a kind and respectful way.

"Hoomaru."

Both pass each other. Even if you don't account the last two days, Satsuki feels worse and worse - the sheer idea of her sister dying takes a lot of her strength. The Life Fiber Sickness feasts on the anxiety of humans. And when Satsuki finally arrives in the room where she met Nonon a few days before to pick her up for the Kiryuin Manor operation, she can hear how her clones are playing music. The young woman opens the door to the dark room and notices the clones playing "Clair De Lune" by Claude Debussy. It seems like they just started playing the piece. Satsuki stands in the dark for a brief moment until she reveals herself to the clones and Nonon, with Nonon sitting on a red chair, enjoying how her musicians carefully, but precisely, hit every correct tone. Satsuki's friend looks over to her. Nonon's smile seems kind and genuine, but as she notices how Satsuki comes closer, with her face becoming more and more clear, her smile slightly weakens. She sits down to Nonon and watches the clones. Nonon moves her chair a bit to Satsuki.

"Hey, Satsuki. Come on. Nothing is over."

"... hmm..."

"I told you how'd it went with my old man years ago. You remember how sad I was? But look what has become of me. Everything's gonna be alright again, you know that."

"... maybe..."

Nonon looks with her eyes down briefly, then up to Satsuki again.

sigh "... Satsuki..." she mumbles and hugs Satsuki. Satsuki slightly hugs back while the clones continue their play, with elegance and strong tones. Their by default enhanced auditive abilities real Life Fiber beings improve the music they play magnificently. Rarely is the time Nonon hears such well played pieces.

"I kind of like this piece. It's sad. But at the same time, you can find solace in it, and peace." Nonon explains. Satsuki nods briefly. The piece the clones are playing surely embraces these two terms, but more importantly, it probably sums up the general vibe of the Nudist Beach members here.

"The clones are almost ready and then we can finally start the performance. I'm going to delay the performance until Ryuko is feeling better again. I want all of us to have a great and enjoyable evening, not just for the clowns here, it's also for Ira, Inu, Uzu, and especially you."

"Thank you..." Satsuki answers quiet. Both continue to listen to the clones music.

"W-would you like me to talk with Ryuko, or someone else?"

"No. It's fine."

"Mhm... okay..." Nonon answers calm. The one eyed clones look up to Nonon and Satsuki every once in a while and try to help them feel better with warm smiles. To see how their current mistress loves their performance surely makes them happy as well.

"Nonon?"

"Yes?"

"... can I say something?"

"Of course."

"You... you are a really good friend."

Nonon smiles.

"You too."

Satsuki nods and looks up to the clones again. Ragyo stands behind them, wearing her grey robe, watching her daughter with a piercing gaze. Her daughter clears her throat and tries to ignore the hallucination of her mother. Followed up, Nonon grabs her small book with the compositions she had in mind. The clones' music paces up, causing Satsuki to feel worse than usual, even though it's not their fault, as it's normal in this piece. It's as if Satsuki starts feeling warmer and warmer, as if her body would try to fight fever. As she looks up to Nonon, she notices how Nonon becomes bleak, and her general vision starts to distort up, with a vision you could describe most precisely with Life Fibers crawling in the corners of her eyes. The composer notices this strange behaviour quickly.

"Hello? Hey, what's wrong?" Nonon asks worried and stands up as Satsuki stands up.

"I... something is wrong, I need to go, I'm not feeling well." Satsuki murmurs and leaves the room. The music continues in her head even though she left the room and intensifies - in the halls she feels claustrophobic, the walls feel so small. So tiny. Without space. Without freedom. No escaping. Not this time. That's what she feels. It feels like Life Fibers are behind her.

"I need... some medication... something to calm down." Satsuki thinks worried, aware of her situation and starts walking faster. Walking around the corner she notices Ragyo that looks at her daughter with a heartless, cold smile.

"Escaping from a fate that will eventually reach you no matter how much you want to run." Ragyo comments as Satsuki runs past her, entering the main halls which have gotten quiet small in her vision. Satsuki tries to reach the med bay of the base, but the closer she comes to it, the closer she comes to fulfill her current goal, her steps become more difficult, harder, and exhausting. The fear of Ryuko dying is too strong. Soon, the few Nudist Beach members in the base appear as if they would be mind controlled by the Life Fibers, and when Mikisugi notices Satsuki's worrying behaviour, her pulse increases, and eventually, she falls down, with anxiety conquering her otherwise resolve and proud mind. Panic can cause humans to perform things they wouldn't do otherwise - they may start doing things that are everything but rational, and that is what happened the last weeks.

The deeds of Nui's Doppelgänger Ichiro who aims on breaking apart Satsuki's mind come to an success closer and closer, and her experiences slowly incapacitate her. The memory of her oldest friend Soroi dying, her strange and otherwise illogical obedience of walking on foot across Japan, with darkness pursuing, the constant nightmares and visits of her mother Ragyo and eventually the one thing she fears the most - the death of her little sister Ryuko... all these things build her up and cause the defeat of her body. It's strange. The Life Fibers did not had to wear Satsuki in order to take her freedom. All they had to do was to slowly break her apart inside her mind. Satsuki believes one thing: It will get worse and worse from now on, knowing that she is defeated by her fear. This is not over yet. It has just begun. And as Satsuki is turned around, looking at the light, with Mikisugi's and briefly after the faces of her Elite-four friends in the corners, the one thing that dominates all her vision is her mother, standing close to her. Her friends distort and move into the corners of her eyes where the Life Fibers haunt her, until in the

middle of her vision, only Ragyo is left. She can hear her friends talking, but she does not understand them anymore.

"Look at you. Defeated by your own fear. Ryuko will die. You know that. You can not save her. You can not even protect her."

"GO AWAY!"

"Her death will be quick, and yet it will be horrendous, and bloody - her blood on your face, culminating all of your mistakes over the past. Just as intended, decades ago."

"GO... AWAY!"

"Satsuki!"

"Sats... uki!"

"S-s... at... suki!"

"... s..."

Life Fibers start singing. And then her vision goes black, incapacitating her.

"Ryuko will run away from you..."

That is the last thing Satsuki hears.

...

A glass is filled with milk. Outside, snow falls from the sky, and it's evening now, 8 PM. The doors to the presidential office opens, and steps echo into the room.

"Director." Masaru says. Ichiro does not turn to his henchman. Due to that, Masaru takes a few steps forward and stands behind Ichiro who simply sits on the imposing chair that is only for the Director of the corporation. Masaru can only see his hair and the pink bowtie.

"I have a question in my mind." the security administrator says and puts his glasses on. Ichiro smiles easy and drinks from the glass.

"You ordered me to find Miss Mankanshoku and her family and we did that, but my question is, why did we had to use so many soldiers for that, and more importantly, where are our transporters? We are having deficits in our production because we lack logistical means at the moment."

"Who cares about the others?" Ichiro asks.

"Well... I do."

"Heh, of course you do. Matoi and her strange friends would not simply accept us to kindly kidnap her little Mako for a few games, would she?"

"Exactly, but why are the transporters not back in the arsenal and the production area where they should be... but in the factories in the country, especially the one at Fuji Hakone Izu, Nagoya and the most part of North Kanto? Have I missed a memo?"

"We only took all the ressources the village had with us and brought them to the factories."

"And which ressources would we find a use for in our fabrics? In an technologically underdeveloped and lagged behind village?"

"Lagged behind? I don't think this village is lagged behind." Ichiro answers smiling and stands up, Masaru watches the man that is one head bigger than him.

"Masaru, I think no one in this world is lagged behind if it comes to having a purpose. Everyone can be a complete idiot, but even idiots have their purpose. Hence why I find it extraordinary doubtful when, of all the people, it's you who uses such strange terms." Ichiro explains with a tad of irony in his voice and walks to the book shelf. Masaru watches Ichiro in distrust.

"... apologies." Masaru answers.

"Poor, poor Matoi, oh well, I don't want to know what kind of horrors she had to experience, or her sister. Not just physical. Especially psychically. I love the way a human brain works." Ichiro chuckles briefly.

"... I see. And what do we do when we got Matoi?"

"We use her to our advantage until we got the entire Nudist Beach group, or at least their leaders. We used a similar principle years ago but this is fairly human compared to last time."

"You... mean the time where... our Director did this... Kamui thing on Matoi and..."

"Yeah, pretty much, but you see, I'm not like that, not at all. That's just cruel. Do we like to be cruel?" Ichiro asks curiously.

"Uhm... is that a question you want me to answer?"

"Pfft, haha, no, of course not! I'm just playing with you. You seem uncomfortable. Are you alright, Masaru?" Ichiro continues to ask curious in a way Masaru would be reminded of talking with Nui, even more than usual. Normally, while he does have a similar personality like her female "me," he does seem to take on games in a more serious and subtle approach than Nui.

"I am perfectly fine."

"Good. You'll understand once Matoi is here. Don't worry. I'm not gonna hurt her. Well, not much, at least, a bit of pain always comes with these processes."

"If you say so. Shall I increase the security in the factories?"

"No need to."

""As you wish." Masaru answers and leaves the room quickly. The door closes. Ichiro rolls his eyes and takes out a cooking book.

"How annoying. Now he's starting to not trust me anymore. If you like to feel healthy, you human vermin, you better stop asking questions."

In the workshop of the Nudist Beach base isn't much going on anymore. Iori is focused on working on new fancy Nudist Beach uniforms, while Gamagoori transports goods through the rooms, and Hoomaru crochets a few scarfs for winter. She curiously looks over to Gamagoori every once in a while.

"I rarely see people like you, Mr. Gamagoori." Hoomaru notes. Gamagoori looks at Hoomaru after investigating a crate.

"Because of my body?"

"Yes."

"Heh, yes, I hear that often."

"Is there a reason?"

"For my large body? There is, yes. Partially." the giant answers and sits down.

"You see, I've developed a sense of Honor soon - mostly due to my father and his profession. For a large part of his life he worked as a firefighter, and he told me stories of him rescuing people with braveness, not showing any sign of pain as long as he can save someone. I always was a rather large and strong young man and so I decided to help out those who were weaker than me, be it in school, in my private life or simply on the street. So I started training, adapted my eating habits and saw how I got stronger every month. Everything was scheduled, and whenever I did not make it to an appointment or an idea I wanted to follow I disciplined myself, especially at the start. It was so I could learn to make it better next time and to develop a resistance for giving up on enduring pain."

lori leaves the room as Tsumugu appears, making a gesture. It seems to be something serious.

"Quickly I became student representative on my school until I met Lady Satsuki. She was looking for someone like and saw... I suppose potential in me, even though I had to kneel down before her. However, she gave me a second chance. And yet I saw myself as a sinner, unable to use my own strength to defeat her, what may have been good but still follows me. As resolve as I appear, sometimes I do ask myself what I should do next too."

"A sinner?"

"Yes. As I said. Whenever I made mistakes, I made sure I disciplined myself, and I did a lot of bad things. Mr. Sanageyama, Mr. Inumut and Miss Jakuzure, and even Lady Satsuki, we did a lot of bad things." Gamagoori explains. Hoomaru nods, agreeing to this.

"We all did bad things. I'm not free of guilt either. The world is not black and white as some people think. It took me a long time to understand that."

"But you try your best to make it better, yes?"

"I do. We can only grow if we can reflect. And those who can't grow by themselves need a helping hand. It's the most valuable lesson I learned in my life, and I thank Lady Satsuki for that. Now my wish is to that teaching hand other people might need. But it's difficult... very difficult, to be precise."

"How... was it, working at REVOCS, I mean?"

"Uncomfortable. Even though I was secretary and therefore in charge of a lot, I had to be careful, especially when I was close to Miss Kiryuin or Miss Harime."

"How long did you knew them?"

"I met Miss Kiryuin soon, I was a child back then. She was looking for someone that could help her out, someone with a high Life Fiber synchronicity. I should have been used for Shinra Koketsu. I almost did... and... I'm glad I was not the one, although... I sometimes do wish I would have been that person."

"You would have wanted that?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I knew Miss Harime from the day she was born. She always was a real nuisance but it was not her fault. Miss Kiryuin wanted her to be a psychopath and she did everything to make that happen. As much as I despise her personality and as much as I understand everyone's opinion on her... she isn't like this because she decided to be a monster. I think no one is a monster. I'm sure people saw, and still see, Lady Satsuki as a monster. It can't be denied. In any case: I knew her for a long time, was her observant to make sure she didn't do anything bad, and whenever she seemed to feel bad I had to intervene and make sure things don't get out of control. But with each day she got more and more disrespectful until I really became what my title suggested: an observant. A quiet person in the background that watches everything."

"I see. I haven't heard this before. You seem to... feel pity for Nui?"

"How would you feel if a person you know from their very birth on slowly develops into a monster?"

"That makes sense."

"Don't understand this wrong now: Harime is a bad person. The things she did, even if she may have not did them fully on purpose, were horrible just like mine and should not be forgotten. I do believe though we all deserve a second chance. I did. And according to Lady

Satsuki's sister Ryuko, Ragyo should have gotten a second chance as well."

"I got a second chance too. Yes. I understand your point."

"Good."

"However, I tell you one thing: You should never become as muscular as I am, because if you do you'll end up transporting crates and other heavy goods from point A to B. Discipline at it's best."

"Oh I could imagine you had a lot of work at Honnouji." Hoomaru answers.

"I did." and suddenly, Nui joins.

"Heyyyy, you narrow gauge crooks, what are we talking about and can I join?" Nui asks curious.

"We only spoke about old times." Gamagoori answers.

"Woah, old times!? Aren't they super boring?! Was History your favorite subject in school or what?!" Nui asks.

"No, physical education."

"Ah, that's even worse!" she reacts surprised and giggles.

"P.E. keeps your body young and feels good."

"Pfft, mon dieu! francais est meilleur!" Nui mocks on french and sits down to the uniforms lori worked on briefly before.

"She likes languages."

"I can see that."

...

...

...

"Wake up."

...

"Wake up, my child."

Moans are audible. Slowly, Satsuki stands up, her body in pain, wearing Junketsu. Her trusty blade Bakuzan lies near a wall, broken in thousands of parts, with only the grip being usable. The room she is appears to be empty, and as she looks around, she notices her mother standing in the door frame, watching her daughter with a cold, menacing gaze. With slow movements, Satsuki stands up.

"Mhm..."

"Mother." the heir of REVOCS reacts with an equally cold look.

"You hate it, do you? This quiet room. Would you prefer this more?" Ragyo asks, turning the room into something different. The walls break apart, and so does the ground, but neither Ragyo nor Satsuki fall, instead, they stand on this empty space, as if they would hover, and slowly but steady, flowers appear, and the Kiryuin manor behind Ragyo, with the sun shining. With despise, Satsuki looks at her Kamui.

"Even more this wonderful garden of flowers. Ah... what is it, that you do not hate about our family?"

"Is that not clear enough?"

"I fear it's not, no. A hybrid? How contradicting. You hate Life Fibers, yet are all of our family members with the exception of your corrupt father such god-like beings."

"Ryuko is different."

"No. Ryuko is no different. Each day you wished the Life Fibers would be culled from this world. They shall all die. That is what you thought, and that is what you still believe, isn't it so? You are no different to me - a cruel truth, I fear." Ragyo answers and attempts to carefully touch Satsuki's hair, however, Satsuki pushes her hand away.

"I am not you, mother. I almost would have became like you, yes. Then I would have lost everyone I loved - my friends, my sister... I will not do the same mistake twice."

"Oh? But does it justify the genocide you plan on Life Fibers?"

"... tz... is that the discussion you want to start now?"

"You laugh, because you know I am right. Where is the difference, Satsuki? Human genocide is wrong, yet Life Fiber genocide is heavenly?"

"It was never about genocide, it was about freedom."

"Freedom of clothes. And now, you slowly realize how marvelous Life Fibers can be. All their abilities..."

"How cruel, rather."

"Mhm, perhaps. You wished to fight as long as you have to, until the Life Fibers are defeated, just like these naked fanatics, but look at you, you fight with Life Fibers as if they would be just as human as you."

"..."

"Everything the new Director of Neo-REVOCS is trying to accomplish is in the sense of saving the Life Fibers, just like your deeds in the sense of humanity are. His behaviour towards you and especially Ryuko is without doubt a cruel one, never without a reason though, and somewhere, you, my child, have to admit, it's funny - you would

never want a Life Fiber hybrid like Ryuko to die, but you still want to destroy the Life Fibers." Ragyo explains. Winds starts howling, and the flowers in the garden fly away.

"Now your predicament lies in not knowing what to do to hinder the death of your first and young sister. She hates you. She wouldn't forgive you. No, rather would she try to escape due to an replacable friend, crying over her like a little child that got it's lollipop stolen."

"..."

You would agree with me on that, would you?" Ragyo asks interested. Satsuki doesn't honor Ragyo a single look.

"You stay silent, for you do not know whether you want to agree or not. As much as you hate me, I will always be here for you. The sheer fact of your hesitating shows your inner conflict. Your poor sister, she will run into a trap, and perhaps there is no cure at all? No matter what you do, Satsuki, you can't stop her incoming death. You may want to bring her into the hospital of your dear little base? Maybe you also just want to let her rotten in her own room? Or is it possible you take her to another mission? Will you have the time to dig a proper grave for her?"

"I won't let her die." Satsuki answers, biting her teeth together. Ragyo rubs her hands very slowly.

"What will you do?"

"She won't die. And she won't run. Everyone who dares to help her in doing so will pay with their life. I will find a cure. For her, and for humanity. We will all be free."

"Will you?"

"I fought my entire life, and even though the pain I feel is unhuman, my resolve will lead to freedom. My ambitions haven't failed, they

never will." Satsuki answers and walks towards Ragyo. She watches her mother with a piercing gaze.

"You may be my mother, yet in the end, you are a monster nonetheless, a pig, just like the vermin you protected under what I had to call "home," and like the psychopath you raised. The madness that the Life Fibers brought upon humanity will find it's end through my blade and my resolve, and no one will resist it's wrath, even if I have to sacrifice my life for this ambition!"

Ragyo starts laughing.

"And now bow, for your corruption, your influence on me, it will show no impact, no, you are but an illusion, unworthy to be spoken about furthermore!" Satsuki yells. The wind cries, stronger and stronger, her words become louder, until the manor breaks apart. Yet Ragyo continues to laugh, confusing Satsuki.

"You pathetic child!" Ragyo smiles and disappears in the wind, her Life Fibers being flown away, landing into Satsuki and piercing through her. Blood leaves her wounded body, fog circles around Satsuki and forces her to close her eyes.

"Satsuki?" Nonon asks worried. When Satsuki opens her eyes, she finds herself back in the medbay of the Nudist Beach base.

"No... non?"

"Oh lord, Satsuki..." Nonon reacts scared and hugs her friend. Iori stands behind Nonon and watches a few monitors that display Satsuki's physical condition, including one that examines her brain activities. Houka sits in the back on a chair, working on his Laptop, probably watching Satsuki's muscle movements to see if everything is alright.

"What... happened..."

"This stupid ass Life Fiber Sickness!" she mocks angry. Iori seems slightly relieved seeing Satsuki alive.

"How... long... what..."

"A few hours. Still, you should stay down for a while." Iori answers and takes a look at Satsuki. She is exhausted, and feels cold.

"Can you bring her another blanket please, Nonon?"

"Yeah, sure!" she answers quick. The musician clones watch Satsuki worried.

"The... Sickness..."

"I know. Tsumugu told me about it. I've dropped everything I worked on, sent Harime into the workshop and came here. You'll feel better soon, don't worry."

"... mhm..."

"We have everything under control."

"... yes..."

Satsuki continues to sleep. Iori nods, as if an expectation of him has been fulfilled.

"Fully exhausted. Good thing it wasn't too serious." he says to himself.

...

Hoomaru and Nui both still are in the workshop. Sanageyama and Gamagoori sit in the background and build out of boredom a small ship, both staring at their construction like excited little kids. The both women however sit far away from each other, that doesn't hinder Nui though on watching Hoomaru the entire time - much to Hoomaru's

discomfort. Still, REVOCS former secretary tries to continue work as usual. Eventually, Nui stands up and starts whistling.

"Dudelu..." the psychopath whistles as she curiously walks towards Hoomaru. Nui takes a chair behind Hoomaru and watches over her shoulder.

"Psst, Hoomaru, I'm behind you!" Nui giggles. Hoomaru closes her eyes, breathes in deeply, then out again, and turns around.

"Yes, Nui?"

"Can I ask you a question?"

"What is it this time?"

"Imagine we both would have to play a fun game of who could sew the better scarf, who'd you think would win? Well I for one am pretty pretty sure about it!" Nui smiles happy. Hoomaru shakes her head annoyed.

"Hihihi, alright, apologies! I just wanted to talk with you about this great convo we had recently! You annoyed me and I think that is not alright." the girl continues. Hoomaru raises her eyebrows.

"Oh. I annoyed you?" Hoomaru answers ironic.

"Mhm! You know, Hoomaru, you do act really strange towards me! Every once in a while you play a super kind lady but in reality you do find me annoying, do you? I mean, it makes sense if you think about it!" Nui says loud. Hoomaru slowly puts her stuff away.

"Every time we have these great Four eyes convos I always feel very uncomfortable! That's not nice! I just want to talk with you, but you always misunderstand me! Hehe, I sometimes think you just want to annoy me! You always are angry when we stop talking! You know what I do when someone annoys me? I annoy them back! Do you like me?"

"Say again?"

"Oh, tz, tz, tz, don't be like that now, sweetie! I'm getting the feeling you really don't like me..."

...

... and that pisses me off." Nui continues, with her voice lowering a bit, as if she would threaten Hoomaru in a subtle way. Hoomaru however isn't scared by her words. She clearly wants to provoke Hoomaru again.

"What are you trying to tell me, Nui?"

"I think you are stupid and lame. And you always take away my time. Also you owe me money. Alright, not money, but you are annoying. You know, I've been thinking of how I should deliver my thoughts towards you and now that we only have these two apes and their weird boat behind us, I thought I'll speak with you about this now! Think about it! We both sit in this stupid room as if we would plan a conspiracy, you act interested but in truth you probably are sided with these strange naked clowns that just want to get rid of me! 'Truth is, you want to get rid of me because I am soooooooooooooo mean to you! Why does no one understand that I don't want anything bad?' Nui asks, noticing how Hoomaru slowly gets angrier and angrier.

"You're telling me that I don't care for you? And that I am just spying?"

"Yuppity yup yup."

"You lost your mind, Harime."

"Me!? No, nononononono, I surely have not lost my mind! No one understands how this world works! Mama knew it, that's why she told me..."

"Now listen carefully, Nui Harime, your mother has taught you a lot of things that are completely wrong, and I was so stubborn to never intervene. You even listen to yourself?"

"Of course I listen to myself!" Nui smiles.

"Oh yeah. I should have figured. A narcissistic psychopath like you only listens to themselves. That's why you don't care about what I say, right? You should maybe start with acting more friendly and stop annoying everyone!"

"But that's how you make friends, right?! I learned it from humans and Mama taught..."

"Leave your god damn mother out of this already!" Hoomaru reacts with a louder voice than before. A surprised expression appears in Nui's face, Gamagoori and Sanageyama notice the discussion and look over to them.

"This, this disgusting belief, that you can only make friends by annoying, torturing and hurting everyone! If you hurt someone it's alright and kind but once someone hurts you you are insulted, do you see the conflict?"

"Ooooooooooh, have I made someone angry!?" Nui grins. happy.

"I'm angry for more than eight years already! Day for day after Miss Kiryuin sent you to Nagoya, you've gotten a worse person than before. You never show yourself grateful when someone helps you, no, instead, you deliver one insult after another! How many times did you told me I am a stupid idiot already?"

"Not enough obviously, haha!" Nui grns.

"Your mother wanted a behaviour like this so that you show now shame towards humans, you only see them as worthless creatures. Admit it, I'm nothing more than that for you too!"

"Well, yes!"

"And you wonder why everyone here wants you to die?" Hoomaru asks Nui.

"What did you just say?" Nui asks shocked. More people notice the discussion and join the workshops - with Tsumugu and Nonon being two of them.

"Every week you tell me how scared you are of dying and that humans are so mean to you! Almost every day I'm knocking on your door to see how you are doing to take away that anxiety of yours and what do I get? "Hoomaru, you are so annoying, go away!"

"Hoomaru, we can't talk about this when these apes around here, they will use that knowledge to their advantage! Ugh..."

"Oh no, Nui, not this time. You better listen carefully now!" she orders. Nui tries to stand up with her eyes rolling, until Hoomaru walks in front of her and forces her to sit down.

"How often have I been on your side already when you felt bad? Was there one week where I wasn't with you? Do you know why I am always on your side even? Especially nowadays?" Hoomaru asks angry. Nui closes her eyes by a small bit, still looking at Hoomaru though.

"I think everyone deserves a second chance."

"Good for you, now stop annoying me, dumb clown." Nui insults Hoomaru and tries to stand up, with Hoomaru forcing Nui down onto the chair again. Tsumugu slowly moves forward a bit.

"My patience has ended. I'm trying to help you and yet you always block away with insults, with fantasies full of violence and lack of interest, the only thing you want is that you are alright, the others don't matter! Then I have to hear how great your damn mother was! Your mother RAPED you! She BRAINWASHED you! She made you

feel like nothing and you embraced that! Every time you cried, she and her men became more evil towards you, they hurt you, until you stopped crying, and now you are laughing! You always put on this forced grin because your mother told you to do so! You'd never want to disappoint her! But I tell you this: your mother NEVER cared for you! NEVER! You were just another tool for her, just like everyone else in her life!"

"You better be careful about your choice of words when it comes to Lady Ragyo or I might hurt you, Rei." Nui threatens.

"I'm talking about Lady Ragyo like this because it's the naked truth! Lady Ragyo never was there for you! She only used you! You were her Number #1 weapon, only interesting when she needed you, hence why she never spent time with you! Hence why you are social isolated! She wanted a psychopath... and she got that! And she got a god damn good one who really doesn't give anything about the feelings of others, even after her death! Lady Ragyo is dead, Nui! You are free!"

"Lady Ragyo was the reason why I lived in the first place! She only wanted the best for me, she had a reason to be the way she was! Your lack of respect really pisses me the fuck off, who do you think you are?!"

"Your "love" to Lady Ragyo is your inevitable death if you don't do anything against it! It was it already! It will be it again! Why don't you understand I don't want you to die? I want you to live! I want you to get the chance Ryuko gave her once! Please, why don't you understand Ragyo never loved you!? You are digging your own grave!"

"You really are a pretentious little bitch, you know that, Hoomaru? You're not talking with a weak human, you are talking with me! And when you talk with me, you show some manners! Humans like you don't deserve respect, NO human deserves respect, as EVERY human is not worth living! From the very moment I gained consciousness, humans were evil to me, remember?! I can't sum up

in words how evil they were! Mama always has been right! Humans are all the same! Equally worthless! And when you seek for a chance you don't receive one! Yeah, I don't cry anymore, that's totally right, why should I!? You better keep your mouth shut and apologize now!"

"I always been there when Ragyo gave her men an order to hurt you! Dozens of months of torture! I STILL HEAR YOU CRYING, ALRIGHT!? Until you stopped! You just wanted them to stop hurting you!" Hoomaru stutters, her eyes slowly watering up. Talking with her like this seems to really get close to Hoomaru's heart.

"And these... "lessons" in which you and Ragyo went to this primordial Life Fiber and she just raped you and you never understood what she did... she only did this to satisfy her sick wishes!

"Grr..."

"I never told you this, but do you know who hasn't just send you down to Nagoya but also a group of men?! Do you know who developed all these strategies of brain washing? Do you?!"

"... you liar..."

"She just wanted you to become a psychopath! "Trigger her latent psychopathic tendencies!" is what she said back then! That's all! That's why they shot you!"

"You liar! Lady Ragyo would never..."

"I'M TELLING YOU THE DAMN TRUTH, YOU IDIOT, HOW THE FUCK DO YOU DARE YOURSELF TO CALL ME A LIAR?!"
Hoomaru screams with tears in her face.

All of a sudden, Nui aggressively stands up and kicks the chair away, then attacks Hoomaru. Sanageyama, Gamagoori and Tsumugu, who slowly sneaked to them, try to intervene, but Nui throws Life Fibers

on the ground with her fingers which build up a wall that burns people who touch it! Then she throws Hoomaru against a wall!

"DO YOU THINK I LET WORTHLESS VERMIN LIKE YOU ALIVE?! DO YOU!?" Nui screams aggressive and jumps over the desks, then grabs Hoomaru and starts pressing her against one. Her eyes are full of menacing fire, and for a very short moment, you see something you could call the literal "Death" in her eyes, as if he would have taken control over her... and it probably wouldn't be far off. Life Fibers sing in a tortured voice in her head, telling her to continue, her emotions playing crazy, first a laugh, then she bites her teeth together, but now, the insanity is perfect. Eventually, Nui starts choking on Hoomaru to kill her.

"OH YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE NOT HAVING A LOT OF FUN! AHAHA! LOOK AT YOU! YOU ARE DYING!" Nui laughs happily, the devils masks in her eyes doing the same. More Nudist Beach guards try to get past the Fiber walls. Iori appears in the room and helps.

"HARIME!" Iori screams shocked and tries to get past the Life Fibers. Hoomaru tries to resist but Nui can't stop. Gamagoori then decides to press the Life Fibers away to open a little gap Iori can climb through, and then he rushes towards Nui and jumps at her, causing her to let off of Hoomaru. Nui tries to kick Iori off of her. The tailor eventually stands up and moves Nui away.

"GRRRRR, LET ME OFF!" Nui yells angry.

"Calm down, god damn it!" he tries to say. Hoomaru crawls along the desk, coughing, desperately trying to catch some air, stuttering unbelievably. Not even a moment later and Hoomaru would have been dead now.

"Look at her! Isn't she your friend?! You almost killed her!" Iori continues, trying to calm down Nui.

"That ain't my friend!" Nui mumbles unsure.

"Calm. Down!" he orders. His words somehow have a calming effect on the psychopath, almost as if they would come from a good and wise friend.

"She... she just lies to me, everyone does, everyone just wants me to feel bad!"

"What does she lie about?"

"That... that mother never loved me!"

"We all know she wanted a psychopath, Nui, she tells you the truth, you can't deny it, and now... please calm down!"

"B-but..."

"Will you listen to a friend or am I just as worthless as everyone else!?" he asks Nui. Nui looks confused.

"You, you, y-you... but..."

"Calm down..."

Nui eases her hands, however, Iori still holds her. Hoomaru breathes heavily and sits down, then looking down to the ground stuttering even more than before. She just looked into Death's eyes.

"Look at her!" Iori orders. Nui looks at Hoomaru.

Finally, Nui realizes what she just did...

"... Ho... Hoomaru... I... he... hey, I..." she mumbles scared. Hoomaru looks up to Nui and slowly tries to stand up, Tsumugu helps her out. She holds her breast area where her heart is, with pain coming out of every single word she tries to say.

"I... just... wanted... to give you... a second chance when no one else did..."

"Hoomaru, I didn't mean..."

"I just want... to know... if my little... troublemaker is still... somewhere there..." Hoomaru cries.

"But Hoomaru, I..." she continues to mumble, not knowing what this feeling is she is experiencing right now.

"You said enough." Tsumugu threatens and helps Hoomaru get away from the psychopath by leaving the room, and a few Nudist Beach medics helping them.

"Wait, Hoomaru, please!" Nui calls, until Hoomaru is away.

"Hoomaru..." Nui whispers and sighs. Iori lets off of Nui. She just stands there, apparently... disappointed in herself? No time for such things, as Gamagoori malovelently approaches Nui, grabbing her and dragging the woman out of the room.

"Follow." he orders angry, walking into the dorms of the Nudist Beach base, opening the door to her room and throwing her into the room.

"You stay here in the dorms! If I see you outside of them, disciplinary measures will follow, have I made myself clear, Harime?!" he screams and slams the door, closing it. Nui falls onto the ground, her face deeply buried in her hands.

"... I don't understand this... why does no one try to understand me... ma... ma would never hurt me... oh no, no, no she would not... she only wants the best for me... oh no, they hate you, they will kill you, what are you doing, Nui... now Hoomaru hates you... but... but... I annoyed her, why does she not... is... is she maybe right, are they all right... what is this feeling, I... feel... that feels bad..." Nui mumbles confused.

...

A strong light appears and lightens up completely white halls. Then, steps are audible, which come from Masaru who wears a red coat covered with some snow, walking through these halls, precisely, as he wants to open of the doors on the end of them. It's completely quiet here other than that - no guards, no sounds, nothing. When Masaru arrives at the last few doors, he opens the eight one on the left. Behind it, there is a room with a bed and a small second room with a toilet, but that's all. The room feels cold, large, yet empty. There's just a small light. And windows? None. Masaru takes a look around, with a more serious appearance than usual.

"Mankanshoku?" he asks. No answer. However, he can see Mako's silhouette under her bed.

"Come out." he orders, holding his hands in his pockets. Mako is too scared however.

"I won't do anything to you, now come out, we need to talk."

"... how... do I know you won't attack me?"

"I want to talk about Matoi. And about what happened days ago. You either come out of your bed or I will leave the room immediately, but then you will get into problems. Be assured my intention is not to hurt you."

"... and... what's with Mataro? And the others?"

"They're alright." he answers and looks at a little tablet with a spoon and two bowls on the bed, one of them with a few pieces of rice corn.

"..."

Masaru waits. Mako carefully peeks out. She has a wound on her face, nothing serious luckily, but still bad to look at, and it will take a few days until it's healed. Masaru slowly shakes his head.

"... the hell is the Director thinking..." he mumbles to himself.

"... and... what do you want?"

"I need to know what happened in this village days ago. Director Harime said he only needed you, however, he used half of our arsenal and units."

"..."

"I need to know it, Mankanshoku!"

"... these... men with their big... helmets, they... well, they..." she mumbles scared, sitting onto her bed. Findings words seems to be difficult. She must have cried minutes ago.

"... they just took my friends and... all the people... and brought them into these transporters..."

Masaru opens his mouth very slowly and just a little bit, biting his teeth together.

"... and when these men came into our house, they... destroyed everything... and this strange... Director, he..."

"What did he do?"

"..."

No answer. Mako is too traumatized still. He waits a brief moment, but Mako really can't say anything.

"... he may uses the people to increase the amount of Life Fibers produced... could Imagine he uses them as slaves..." he mentions.

"Why... are you doing all of this?" Mako asks.

"What?"

"The things you do. Why are you participating?" she asks. Masaru doesn't quite understand the question, it seems... or maybe he doesn't want to.

"You make so many people sad and... you hurt so many, but, but why?"

"... if... if I can be honest for a moment... I sometimes ask that myself too." he answers wistful.

"You... help this man... but why? Why does he do something like this?"

"The Director isn't just a man. He is Life Fiber. Just like the Grand Couturier and Ryuko Matoi. When I saw him for the first time, I was scared. With time passing, I believed that, even though his methods were questionable, that he might have found a better way for humanity than Miss Kiryuin."

"But... why?"

"I think the Director doesn't handle everything because he just is in the mood, but because he has a mission. He does the things to help his species develop, just like I want to develop and protect mine."

"And... you do that by hurting others?"

"Sacrifices are necessary, Mankanshoku, sometimes, it's..."

"There hasn't have to be any sacrifice! Why can't we be friends? Why can't this evil man just... come in peace, like a good alien?! Why... can't you just come in peace?! You kill people!"

"... I know."

"Does that have anything to do with protection!?"

"... it does not."

"You... can't do this."

Masaru clears his throat. Then he looks back to the other doors that are locked. Behind all these doors are people - including Mako's family, each of them locked in a single room like the one both people stand in right now. Even their dog. The thought of not knowing how the others are is cruel to Mako, and you can really see in her eyes her anxiety. And it looks like Masaru, as much as he usually stands behind his master... it looks like he has his doubts, and they incite furthermore the more he sees with his own eyes.

"You want to visit one of your family members?" he asks.

"... I just... want to know that they are alright."

"Follow me." he orders and walks forward, standing in the door frame, waiting for Mako to come out, which however happens only hesitantly. But as Mako finally leaves the room with Masaru, the Head of Security opens the door on the other side, revealing Sukuyo sitting on her bed with a desperate look.

"M-mum?" Mako asks. Sukuyo looks up to her child, her hopelessness engraved in it. Desperation. Masaru doesn't want to see this.

"... Mako..." she mumbles and hugs her daughter, and tears start flowing. Then, Masaru closes the door and walks out of the halls without saying a single thing, but his eyes, his mouth, his face, they speak a clear language: he does not know whether all of the things he does and did really are right anymore, or were they right at all? Does the end justify the means? As the lights go out and Masaru arrives in the arsenal near the Auditorium, he looks at all the soulless Ashigaru units that are just awaiting orders from him, and the conscious Samurai - if they are conscious at all, who can say that? - are loyal and await orders as well. Arriving in the Auditorium of Neo-REVOCS, he walks onto the spot Ragyo always stood when she had a speech to perform. The large windows around him reveal the snow fall outside - the next days will be even more snowy. It could be a

beautiful time for the last month of the soon ending year, and yet he just stands here, in the halls of a corporation he is unsure about whether he really should work for anymore or not.

"... if the Director really forces people to work... I sound pathetic... as if I would be a good guy myself now. I'm a hypocrite. Nothing more." he murmurs to himself, disappointed of his deeds, while he watches the wonderful snow...

...

Satsuki wakes up. Even if she feels weak, she tries to stand up again. It got late, 10 PM, but there's still something going on in the command center. Mikisugi, Tsumugu, Houka, Gamagoori, a few Nudist Beach men and Hoomaru are in the room. Satsuki notices Hoomaru's rather bad mood. She stands next to Tsumugu.

"You should lay down again, Satsuki." Mikisugi mentions, but Satsuki reacts with only a head shake.

"No, I'm... I'm alright. I will make myself a tea in a bit and sit down." the exhausted woman answers. Mikisugi hesitates at first, but eventually nods. He can't forbid Satsuki anything anyway.

"Well, Houka suggested we should send some groups that deal with these factories now."

"Yes. And when we are done, we know how the Life Fibers are produced. We can enhance Ryuko's life span with that, and we also can use that knowledge to reveal to the world what Neo-REVOCS is, in truth, doing." Houka continues. You can however hear out of his voice that Houka himself doesn't quite know if this strategy will go up - enhancing Ryuko's life span, that is. Mikisugi points on the planning table which displays Japan once again. A few factories have been marked with red dots - near Ôsaka for example, or around the area of the national park Satsuki visited a while ago.

"It's going to be a long night. We won't waste any time and start in about an hour or two. Each of us will lead a group of people, then we can vary a good bunch of these buildings." Mikisugi plans. Satsuki watches Hoomaru.

"Hoomaru as well?"

"Hoomaru knows the factories of REVOCS. She knows how they are built, and she helped out Houka when we attacked the main manufacture. And... there was a situation before and she wants to get on different thoughts."

"I see. Mikisugi?"

"Yeah?"

"We should bring Ryuko to the medbay. And guard it."

"Guard it? I mean, yeah, we can bring her to the medbay, no problem, but is it necessary to guard her?"

"I want her to be guarded."

"But wh..."

"Guard. Her." Satsuki orders. Mikisugi appears to be confused, Tsumugu however seems to like the thought, since he already dislikes Life Fibers, and even though he gets along with Ryuko, he has a hard time trusting her... especially after what happened with Nui some time ago, he'd just have to imagine what would happen if Ryuko goes insane.

"... you are alright, yes?"

"Yes, I am. I... don't want Ryuko to do something stupid."

"We all don't want that. We still should ask Ryuko if she is alright with that since..."

"We won't."

"Satsuki, Ryuko is..."

"Aikuro Mikisugi! That is my sister! I spent year for year avenging her just to find out she is alive and I will NOT let her die because she does something idiotic! She needs to trust me!"

"Alright, alright, I getcha... it might be better, I don't know. I'll bring her to the medbay tomorrow personally. She'll get an own room." Mikisugi answers in a calm tone to avoid an escalation. Satsuki watches Mikisugi with a gaze you'd only see from her years ago - ice cold, calculative. Following up, the group prepares the operations.

...

Keyboard sounds. The monitors are reflected in Masaru's glasses. He's sitting in the cold server room of the Neo-REVOCS HQ. Other than the keyboard sounds, the servers and computers produce additional noises. Even though it's late and he shouldn't be around in the building anymore, he still sits here. Something keeps him awake. It's visible in his eyes. He takes a look at one of the factories, investigates the blueprints, then switches to the cameras. Red lights are visible in a certain room., These have to be Life Fibers. When he zooms closer to them... he slowly... stands up, and his pulse is rising...

"... oh my god."

...

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

The room is quiet, and the warmth is rather uncomfortable. A TV flackers around, although it's muted. It's 11 PM.

Senketsu is sitting on a desk, watching Ryuko, who lays on her bed, looking up to the ceiling with the Manga she talked about a few times

on her belly. Then, someone knocks on the door. Ryuko doesn't answer. Senketsu however, while he hesitates at first due to Ryuko's missing answer, decides to give whoever stands on the other side a chance.

"Yes? Come in?" he asks calm.

Slowly the door opens, and a shadow is visible. The Kamui looks to the door. Ryuko does the same. Then, a pink shoe appears, and some blonde hair. Ryuko slowly closes her eyes annoyed looks away. Senketsu watches as Nui enters the room - well, not completely, she stands in the door frame. Ryuko's friend also notices how Nui isn't smiling as usual - she... she seems to have a very neutral and normal look. And what's more noticable is how Nui doesn't even seem to attempt to annoy Ryuko or Senketsu, it rather looks like Nui just wants to have a normal conversation, and according to very subtle body movements, like her feets moving a little bit on the ground, you can see well how Nui tries to find the right words - and the correct tone. It's obvious that's not how she usually starts a conversation.

"... I... just wanted to see how you guys are doing." she murmurs very quiet . Senketsu looks to Ryuko who however doesn't honor Nui a single look.

"Ryuko does not want to talk. But we are doing alright. *sigh* I do, at least." he mentions.

"I... see." she answers.

"Do you happen to need anything? Or has anyone sent you?"

"No, I just wanted someone to talk, that's... all." Nui answers in a normal voice. Not her usually high pitched voice, it sounds completely normal, a bit distant and cold, sure, but different from everything Ryuko and Senketsu heard so far.

"Oh, hm. Well, Ryuko... you know, she doesn't want to talk with you. Out of all the people. You... understand why." he answers.

"Of course. It was just... a stupid idea from me. I'll let you guys alone again, I suppose." Nui answers, clears her throat as if she has something to say but decided not to, and eventually tries to leave, until...

"What do you want to talk about?" Ryuko asks all of a sudden. Nui briefly stands still and then looks back. The psychopath closes the door, with her hands behind her back. Still, Ryuko is annoyed, and she does not hide it from her father's murderer. Senketsu sits down on top of the TV.

"You see, Hoo... maru and I, we had a little... argument and it got out of control. I attacked her, I hurted her and I wanted to kill her, but I did not in the last moment because Iori stopped me and now I... I feel really weird, and I hoped you... could maybe tell me why." Nui reacts, absolutely unable to understand what this feeling is. Ryuko slowly nods.

"... so you lost your mind, huh?"

"Whenever I hurt someone, it's because I want to play and provoke them so I can get their attention and continue my fun games, and when I killed someone, then I did it because I found them to be boring. Don't... get me wrong, I'm... yeah, I'm a murderer, but... not a serial killer, I haven't killed hundreds of humans, just a few, maybe a dozen, but... I never felt bad for anyone, why would I? And now... I tried to kill Hoomaru and I feel strange."

"You really have no clue about what you are doing, do you?"

"I do, but... why do I feel so weird?" Nui asks. Ryuko does not know whether she wants to be shocked or not. A person like Nui barely understand emotions and empathy, so it's to expect Nui would say something like that, on the other hand... she knows about this

feeling, she is aware of her deed, and apparently, she does really feel bad, even though she should not. Senketsu tries to answer.

"And what is that feeling? Can you maybe describe it?" he asks curious, like he wants to help, or at least hear her out.

"... it's... as if I would have done something wrong. Like a task I couldn't fulfill. I suppose... I'm disappointed in myself." she whispers slowly.

"You regret what you did, Nui."

"Regret?"

Senketsu raises his eyebrows - uh, well, if you can call the collar the eyebrows. His eye enlarges as well.

"When you majorly do some shit and you feel bad afterwards, then we regret that we did it. You're feeling bad cause you did a serious mistake. You never had a feeling like that or what, you psycho?!" Ryuko asks.

"No, I never do anything wrong, I..."

"Cause your Nui Harime, huh?"

"No, because..."

"Because your endless selfishness makes you feel nothing anymore, hm? You can just go around and do whatever the hell you want."

"I'm not selfish." she mumbles as if that would have hurt her. Ryuko sits onto her bed. The light makes her face well visible - her skin has gone bleak. It's a miracle she is still alive. You'd have to be afraid of her trying to walk - she looks like she could fall onto the ground if isn't very careful with her steps.

"Then why do you always talk about yourself? Why do you always laugh when someone feels bad? Why do you love to hurt people?"

Why the hell do you hate humans and what's with your appearance, aaaaaand why do you think you gotta hurt people to show them you like them?" Ryuko asks annoyed. Nui doesn't have an answer to these questions.

"What did Hoomaru tell you to annoy you so hard that you'd want to kill her?"

"She said mama would have just used me as a tool and never really loved me."

Ryuko shakes her head. Senketsu sighs.

"I don't know "Mama." I have no clue how she was. But based on what I did saw, I can imagine Hoomaru is right." Ryuko answers. Nui looks up to Ryuko, confused. She hoped for a different answer.

"... but why would Mama do such a thing?" she asks. Ryuko thinks briefly.

"I... honestly have no clue, Nui. A mother should always care for her kids, shouldn't she?"

"Yes?" Nui answers. Ryuko looks to Senketsu briefly, then to Nui again, moving her mouth around a bit, as if she would bite her lips slightly, not strong, but just a little tiny bit.

"There's one thing I'm sorry about for you." Ryuko reacts. Nui doesn't know what she means.

"I could have been you, if Ragyo wouldn't have thrown me away like trash. Then I'd be you."

"Is... it bad to be like me?" Nui asks.

"... I don't know. Killing humans... is fucked up. Torturing them... is fucked up. Insulting them... is bad."

"... then I suppose it really is something bad to be me." she answers disappointed. But more: dejection. Pure dejection. It doesn't matter what other people think of her - she just smiles and laughs about it.

Except these people are Ryuko and Satsuki.

Then it matters.

"I'll be real with you. You ain't getting a hug, or motivation words from me, Nui. You are an asshole. The biggest asshole I've ever seen in my life. You ain't showing any emotions, you ain't feeling anything for anyone, nah... you just laugh about the feelings of others. Remember how you made me turn into a monster and you just started laughing like crazy? Or when I got into this fucked up Junketsu thingy?

You ever felt bad for that?

Have you?"

"... no."

"Cause you loved it. Right?"

"... yes." she murmurs. Ryuko stands up and walks towards Nui slowly until she looks straight into her eyes.

"... how the fuck can you think I would want to talk with a heartless psycho like you?" the young woman asks. Every single word hits Nui easily. It's well visible.

"... I... just thought I can talk with you be... because we know each other for so long."

"... fuck off. Or I won't just cut your arms this time." Ryuko threatens evil.

"... alright." Nui answers quiet and opens the door, then walking into the doorway, looking on the ground towards Ryuko's direction.

Ryuko watches Nui closely.

"... you see, I had a childhood too. Mama said I should never cry when humans annoy me. I disliked humans, but I never hated them. I just did the things I did for the Life Fibers, because I loved them."

"..."

"I always cried though. I wasn't used to this. When I was a single Life Fiber, I always were loved, and Mama tried to recreate that for me, she... she really tried her best. I cried every two or three days, but humans just laughed about it and continued, they didn't care for me. And... maybe it was justified, I never cared for them either, but... why would you hurt someone in that age?"

"..."

"Then they started torturing me. Hoomaru said it was Mama's fault. They simply kicked me, they took my toys away, forced me to sew more clothes. I'm not asking you to pity me."

"... so?"

"I think with six or seven they often locked me in a black room with just a white light which was the door, but I never was able to get out. They... recreated the room we call the absolute emptiness. I could hear what happened outside sometimes. It was mostly quiet. But I always cried. And when I did, I got attacked. Around that time we had a lot of storms."

"..."

"... and then, one day, when I was thirteen years old, my mama gave me a parasol that would protect me. I finally was allowed to see the world for myself.

That's where I got hunted down by humans and shot. It was raining. There was so much rain, I can't describe it. And there, I killed my first

humans. I smiled to hide tears.

I stopped crying that day. No one cares anyway."

Nui leaves the room and closes the door...

AN: A pretty heavy chapter today, I could imagine. It's gonna get heavier. 18, 19, 20... I promise, this is just the start of the horror part of this story. My goal is to get at least to chapter 22 until the end of this year, realistically, it's probably to 19 or 20, but we will see. :) I'd be super happy about a review, as always, and especially if I hit the feelings, I'm still trying to improve in that area. :D I'll see you again next time, friends, and really, thanks for reading my story, I'm so glad I got such awesome readers! I got the best parts for the story still hidden in the last chapters, it's gonna be amazing. :D

For You Live Ever Eternal In Me

AN: Welcome back to a new chapter!... this one will be quite heavy to read. It's one of the darkest chapters in the entire story, either the second or THE darkest chapter. So if you thought Chapter 10 was heavy, well... see for yourself. Have fun reading! :) And check out the new Story cover I drew, it's the cover for chapter 18!

It's afternoon. Satsuki steps through the halls of the REVOCS headquarter. Outside, thunder and storm dominate the sky, and when the young woman in her student council president outfit that consists of beautiful white, yellow and blue colors, enter the office, she notes that no one is there. A thunder is to hear. Satsuki keeps an folder in her hands - the documents seem to be confident, more or less.

"Where did Rei Hoomaru go...?" Satsuki wonders with a distant tone in her voice and notices blood, and water on the stairs that lead into the presidential office, and even bloody finger prints. Satsuki slowly walks up the stairs, hearing a few steps in the office, but no one is talking. Is only one person there? Eventually, she opens the door.

Ragyo stands in front of the window behind her desk, with her back presented to Satsuki.

"Mother." Satsuki greets. Ragyo doesn't react. Satsuki then notices the blood on the ground, almost walks into it, then her gaze moves around the room. Blood lies on several points of the room - on the ground, on the desk, even on a few flowers. The young woman however doesn't really care for the chaos and moves on to the desk where she patiently awaits her mother's attention, which she gains after a few seconds followed by a lightning. She watches Satsuki interested. Steps are audible in the room nearby.

"The plans for Your stadium. My student council members Jakuzure, Gamagoori, Sanageyama and Inumuta planned everything out."

"Let me see." Ragyo orders and takes the folder from her daughter's hands. Perfectly well organized, as Ragyo quickly notices, and full of useful information - height, amount of seats, the estimated space that will be used for the building, the estimated time until the stadium is finished, calculated costs and prices by Houka Inumuta. Security measures developed by Ira Gamagoori - REVOCS guards and surveillance cameras everywhere, even small gun towers to pacify intruders, and finally, general rules of the stadium and other sorts of uses, developed by Uzu Sanageyama and Nonon Jakuzure. All of this is readable in the several pages big folder.

"Half a year?" Ragyo asks perplexed.

"Yes."

"That sounds unrealistic."

"It will be done sooner than you may believe. We are no amateurs."

"True..." Ragyo answers calm and lays down the folder. The door next to the presidential office opens, the door that leads to the Couturier's quarters. Hoomaru leaves the room with blood on her upper body and a calm, but serious face expression.

"Lady Satsuki." Hoomaru greets in a distant voice. Satsuki briefly peeks into the quarter - she can see a blood covered Nui, and only her right eye is well visible, her other eye is apparently covered by her hair which is rather untypical. Ragyo's daughter looks back to her mother.

"Don't mind her. Her being weak after all is the proof that perfection is a wish we can never fulfill, only strive for."

"Naturally."

"Very well, Satsuki. We haven't eaten in a long time. Go to the dining hall and order yourself something - I will join you briefly after."

"Of course. Is there anything wrong with the folder?"

"No. I will take a closer look at it later. It appears well thought out however. Go. I have to cull out said weakness." Ragyo orders. Satsuki nods

"As you wish." Satsuki answers and leaves the presidential office. With a calm, but resolve gaze, she walks down the stairs that lead, if she walks them down entirely, to the server room. Forty of the ninety steps down, she enters the dining hall, which is filled with noble, but cold appearing furniture. White and red chairs, a large window wall from which you can watch Tokyo perfectly, and rain that slams on the glass, and wind howling outside. On her right side is an open wall. Looking through it, she can see the large kitchen of the REVOCS HQ. Eight cooks, awaiting orders from their CEO, her daughter and her other servants, and as Satsuki sits down, a waiter appears.

"As usual." Satsuki reacts without honoring the waiter a single look. The table is long enough for twenty-two people. The chair colors represent who is allowed to sit on which chair - red chairs are for the highest ranked employees of REVOCS: Ragyo Kiryuin, Satsuki Kiryuin, Rei Hoomaru, and Nui Harime. The eighteen other chairs are reserved only for VIPs or friends of the Kiryuin group - Nonons father for example, who leads an own company inside the Kiryuin group - a corporation that supports cultural education, well before he was, five years later, doomed into mine shafts as punishment for something he did not had any fault for. The world is cruel. Satsuki always needs to keep that in her mind. Briefly after Satsuki sitting down on the noble chair, dominant steps are audible... and ten seconds later, the tall woman appears, calm and slowly sitting down on her own chair. Her mother seems to have some blood on her hands, as Satsuki quickly notices.

"You seem to handle your "Honnouji-Academy" well, my dear." Ragyo notices. Satsuki nods briefly.

"They've been loyal the moment they arrived."

"Good. As I expected."

The waiter appears and notices Ragyo. The Director looks at him with a cold hearted and distant gaze, letting the man know exactly what his CEO wants, and without asking any questions, he walks back into the kitchen. Two minutes later, he appears with an expensive bottle of Sake and two glasses. He fills both of them a bit.

"Make sure you always keep control over your empire. A group of humans can be led by every fool, but your task... that is one only the strongest and most resolve beings of this world can fulfill. We Kiryuin's have been chosen for that. It's in our blood to lead."

"I'm looking up to you, mother. I will act as you wish."

"You do not look up on me, my child." Ragyo answers and drinks her Sake. Satsuki does the same.

"We both look down. On everyone who is not like us."

Satsuki nods.

"We are superhumans, Satsuki. There are only a few that are just like us. Why should we feel bad for those who are inferior to us? Even we, at one point of our long living dynasty, were nothing more but a mere pile of dirt. Until we found our destiny. One day, I will show you that destiny."

"It would be an honor."

"You will like it." Ragyo answers. A few minutes later, noble plates with food are brought by the waiter - for Satsuki several well made salads and fish. Ragyo's daughter looks at her mother's meal - a perfectly well made lobster. She watches how Ragyo slowly starts eating the lobster. The sheer look disgusts Satsuki. Minutes feel like years for the young woman, every single moment she has to spend with Ragyo is a lost one. A few minutes pass, and Hoomaru appears,

who still is soaked with blood, entering the kitchen. Satsuki briefly catches what she says.

"I don't care. If you want to keep your job, you make sure to find some fresh fish. Visit the Tokyo market, it doesn't matter, but if I don't get a proper meal in the next thirty minutes for the Grand Couturier, you will be fired, is that clear?!"

"... yes."

Hoomaru leaves the kitchen annoyed, walking next to Satsuki and Ragyo.

"Hoomaru rarely is that angry." Satsuki notices.

"She never is angry. It's difficult to make her angry. A good trait. Patience is an advantage."

"She always watches someone."

"That is her task."

"I suppose so."

"Don't we all need a task in life, Satsuki?" Ragyo asks and lays down her food. Satsuki nods. Her mother now notices Satsuki hasn't eaten yet.

"You seem uncalm. Is something wrong?" Ragyo asks calm. She knows exactly Satsuki hates her. Ragyo is just playing.

"Everything is alright. I'm just not... hungry, that's all."

"Do you sometimes wish it would be different?"

"... I'm afraid I don't understand."

"Do you miss your sister?" Ragyo asks. Satsuki's pupils shrink. How does she know?!

"Would you prefer to be with her?" Ragyo continues. Slowly but steady, the room fills up with Life Fibers. Out of Ragyo's clothes, Life Fibers crawl out. Satsuki slowly stands up.

"This Life Fiber Sickness will not be my end." Satsuki reacts evil and walks towards the exit of the room, but Life Fibers close the door. Then, Satsuki turns around, seeing her mother walking towards her with a sinister look.

"It already did, child." Ragyo smiles. Out of the walls that turn more and more into a Life Fiber hell, quiet singing is audible, and a baby crying. Ryuko's crying. Satsuki cannot stand that sounds.

"You seem to suffer?" Ragyo wonders and raises her arm. Life Fibers start crawling onto Satsuki. A strange pressure is noticable, and it's painful, so painful, Satsuki needs to bite her teeth together.

"Your sister is already lost. She always was. Stop running away from the truth."

Then, the Life Fibers rip Satsuki apart.

...

"Satsuki!?" Nonon asks her friend worried. Satsuki sits there, without any orientation, not even shocked anymore, but somewhat expressionless.

"I'm alright." Satsuki answers calm and blinks two times quickly. It's 4 AM.

"You really should lay down, Satsuki. The birdies will do their job."

"... I don't know."

"Come on. Go to bed, please. If you're not fresh for the next day, you're always grumpy. And sleep is really necessary, so... please." Nonon asks Satsuki. Satsuki hesitates however.

"You... you make sure everything is going well, yes?"

"Of course. Now go sleep before I'll play music." Nonon grins. Followed by that, Satsuki stands up and leaves the room.

"I hope these stupid factories really help us. That stupid alien dirtbag, when I get my hands on that dirty freak he'll regret annoying my friends..."

...

During the night, Nudist Beach groups managed to attack a few of the Fiber Factories around the country. However, Mikisugi, Tsumugu and Gamagoori's units have not found any useful clues. It's as if Neo-REVOCS would have expected Nudist Beach to attack them at this point. Houka and Hoomaru in the meantime work together, attacking a factory near the national park Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui visited a while ago. Since Tokyo is close, there's a higher chance of reinforcements arriving at the factory, hence why they combined their power. Both of them examine the factory and it's seemingly empty halls, while their Nudist Beach team mates secure the area.

Strangely enough, here, Houka and Hoomaru find white, empty halls with a red floor. The halls are cold and empty, they don't have a soul, no smell, nothing. On top of that, Houka notices how he cannot receive any more electrical signals which means he does not have any insight on the blueprints anymore. Hoomaru, who is wearing a so called "Needle Rifle", a weapon orientated on the REVOCS Standard Fiber Rifle used by Nui, keeps her weapon steady in case any opponents appear. The Needle Rifle is a slightly weaker version developed by Nudist Beach that is less expensive to produce and uses a mix of ordinary lead with Life Fibers. The weapon is able to reliably stop a Life Fibers regeneration process for a short amount of time. It cannot kill or severe the threads, but it's a good start for fighting Couturiers. Both their steps echo through the empty halls.

"Still nothing?" Hoomaru asks. She's wearing her stylistic pilote glasses and a Nudist Beach uniform that has been, just like the other

uniforms, slightly adjusted by Nui and Iori. It covers a slight bit more skin as the knee caps, hips, shoulders and arms all now have light Latex-like armor that can protect from melee weapons and light ammo such as the range weapons the Ashigaru units tend to use.

"No. I did not expect that to happen. In this very moment, we supposedly stand in the sewing halls, but obviously there are none, so these blueprints have to be outdated. Damn it..."

"Let's find it out then." Hoomaru answers resolved and arrives at a silver looking door with Houka. The woman kicks open the door and aims with her weapon while Houka produces blue-greenish light with his Impulse Regalia. And that is necessary, as the hall they just entered is completely dark. Except for a few red light sources - these must be Life Fibers.

"Look." Houka says as he approaches the Life Fibers. Hoomaru notices the Life Fibers but tries to search for a button that activates the lights in the room. They can barely see things in the next three or four meters. Dead Life Fibers lie on the ground as well, if only very few.

"I've never seen anything like this when I worked at REVOCS. This is completely new."

"Then what did you saw?"

"The same thing you saw. Humans that were devoured by clothing. I've been told if they would have been inside these COVERS, they would have simply... disappeared."

"Disappeared?"

"The Life Fibers would have, according to the intel I found out last year when I took a look at the REVOCS database, drained the person's blood. The skin and flesh would then slowly dissolve, similar to acid. In the end, Miss Kiryuin threw the plan as she wanted

to get done with Shinra Koketsu. If Shinra Koketsu would have never be finished, this would have been Plan B."

"I see. Really makes you think how all of this went unnoticed for such a long time."

"It's simple. If you own a company as huge as REVOCS, you can simply buy everyone. Or, if money didn't worked, we just, as Miss Kiryuin called, erased our problems. I assume that is what the Director does as well. No one can tell me you can simply build up an army full of robots and Samurai and get away with it just like that, and the last situations we had only emphasize that."

"I agree." Houka answers and reaches the Life Fibers. It seems as if there are capsules, just like the ones Masaru saw in the Neo-REVOCS HQ, however, this time, they are filled. Curiously observing the capsules, Houka starts analyzing them. Solid steel, but somehow, it feels unearthly, as if it would be more than what it appears to be. Large keypads are visible too.

"Let's see what you have." Houka mumbles to himself while Hoomaru continues to investigate the room. Steel chests, barrels, it feels to her and Houka as if they really would have entered a room that should not exist on earth. Hoomaru pulls out a flashlight and lights up the room. There are dozens of these capsules.

"We always took our Life Fibers from the primordial Life Fiber under the Kiryuin Manor, but not from here. Strange."

"Hoomaru then notices a large gate, and overpasses left and right meters above her, and now it's getting clear how this entire part of the facility is built just like the halls they walked through moments ago. As Hoomaru opens the gate, a loud screech comes from the steel that slowly moves away, and behind that gate...

... is absolutely nothing? There is just a large, empty, red room. Hoomaru walks into the room, but it just confirms it: nothing. She takes out her radio.

"Hoomaru to the Nudist Beach HQ. We might have something here, do you guys read me?"

Nothing.

"Hoomaru to the Nudist Beach HQ."

Still nothing.

"Damn it." she mumbles annoyed. Then, she hears something falling on the ground, and thus, she quickly turns around. Houka's lights are still visible, but it seems like he discovered something.

"Inumuta?" she asks. Houka whispers something in a shocked tone, causing Hoomaru to step towards him quicker.

"Inumuta?!" she yells.

"AH!" he screams, and his lights suddenly vanish. Hoomaru aims at his last position with the flashlight... but he is gone. Life Fibers start singing in the background quiet, and some of the capsules open. The woman lays down her flashlight on a desk and keeps her weapon steady. Another item falls on the ground - something like glass.

And then, she can hear someone chuckling playfully. Hoomaru's eyes close slightly.

"Director." she greets Ichiro annoyed.

"Hello Rei." he answers from the side, but the Life Fibers give away a slight echo that makes it hard to determine where the psychopath truly is at the moment.

"Took a long time until we got to meet each other, hm? That alarm really got me out of the bed, so to speak, I'm glad to know though I'm meeting with you. Sure was worth it..."

"That overconfidence in your voice. The only voice that is so similar to that is the one of Miss Kiryuin, and even then..."

"We always have to improve when others cannot, right? After all, everyone strives for perfection. Those who say they don't are simple liars, or not worth the air they breathe at all.

"Because there is no perfection. I believed there would be, but it does not exist."

"Perfection is what we make out of it, Rei.. Where's the trust in those who are like me? We would have a place for you. I'd love to have someone like you on my side. But no, nope, nope, nope... instead you work for a species that never really wanted you in the first place. Remember where you come from, remember where it led to."

"I'm doing what's right, Harime, just like you do what you think is right."

"How true. But you must never forget the fun about the predicament everyone is in."

"So your mind games towards Ryuko, Satsuki and the others are just purely for fun?"

"Well yeah, of course they are. At least that's one part of the truth. How'd you know that?" he asks ironic, with his voice coming closer.

"I know you. You are just like Nui... except that she, despite her origin, somewhere deep inside her, still has a human soul. And you hate that. You always did."

"She does, yes. Me? Uh, uh. See, my dear Rei, I didn't had to be raised like a stupid little child. Unlike her, I really can and are considering myself a Life Fiber, simply disguised behind a human skin. The only thing my dearest Nui and I have in common is how we always try to include fun into our little games. However, I find it very

astounding that you try to... heh, how should I call it? "Convince her to become one of the good guys."

Hoomaru hears steps behind her and fires her weapon. She couldn't hit, but for a brief moment, Ichiro was visible, having a sinister, dark smile.

"Well it will not work, Rei, things like "good" and "bad" don't exist, you should know that very well by now. You can't "rescue" her because she does not want to be "rescued", yet you still try it."

"Curse you."

"Nanana, now let's calm down a bit, jeez, you seem to be annoyed?" he asks. Hoomaru moves forward.

Suddenly she notices how something crawls up her legs. It seems to be Life Fibers, which she kicks away, and as she turns around, her flashlight is gone. A strange feeling overcomes her, and then she suddenly feels a finger on her shoulder tapping on her twice. Hoomaru shoots behind her, misses however, bites her teeth together, turns around again, and suddenly, Ichiro stands in front of her!

"Booh!" he laughs with the flashlight under his face. Hoomaru seems to hit Ichiro, but looking closely he simply dissolved the part that could have been hit by the needle and therefore avoided the attack. Swiftly rushing to Hoomaru, he disarms and grabs her head, however, he gets bitten, with her even ripping out some of his "flesh" and then kicking him away. This stuns Ichiro for a brief moment, and quickly she tries to flee.

"Is it really that unfun playing nowadays, Rei!? You loved to play back in the days!" he yells and drags Hoomaru with Life Fibers to him. Hoomaru falls on her nose, breaking it and losing her glasses, and then, Ichiro rams her against the wall. Life Fibers crawl onto Hoomaru's legs and tie her up. The parasites light up red in the dark, therefore, Hoomaru can see Ichiro through the lights who looks at

her with a slight smile, while the wound on his arm regenerates again.

"Rei, it's too bad you decide to just run away. My favourite game always was hide and seek, back then, you seeked me, now I am the one and you just run away as if you are not in the mood for it, why is that?"

"Oh fuck you."

"Really a shame that you had to get over here. Would you forgive poor lil Nui for what she did yesterday?"

"How do you..."

"Senketsu." he grins.

"You... miserable dog..."

"I'm afraid I cannot promise you a quick and merciful death, you know how I am, I just like to hurt people. Wonder if Nui's gonna cry? Then you would have at least accomplished your "mission". If you ask me, I hope she does. Greet my little friend from me. She'll be the next one." Ichiro laughs playfully dirty and knocks Hoomaru out.

...

A few hours later...

...

A strong wind howls once again, and the days are getting shorter... or at least the sunlight is less present. Japan will face more snow in the next days. A few Samurai walk through the halls of the Neo-REVOCS HQ, and as they enter the presidential area, it's revealed that they carry a suitcase. Masaru looks up to them while sitting at his desk with a neutral look while the two men give him the suitcase.

"Statistics and reports from most of the provinces of Japan, as you wished."

"Thank you. Now go." Masaru orders. The Samurai leave the room. Followed up by that, Masaru opens the suitcase and is greeted by a staple of folders with reports of the provinces. When everything is quiet, Masaru takes one of the folders and opens them. All of them have about 20-24 pages, cleanly sorted, however, Masaru focuses on the last pages. He finds financial records - when did people buy what in which week and how much? A thing Masaru quickly notices is that a large part of the black numbers come from the new clothes Neo-REVOCS sells - clothes tailored by the Couturiers. As Masaru looks at the numbers more and more, he notices that this large amount of income only happened once and then never again. Actually, after that, the numbers of sold products decrease by an surprisingly high amount, as if only a handful of people would buy them, in fact, it's going into a minus area. It's getting even more stranger when Masaru thinks about how there are increased reports of missing people on the internet, radio and TV.

Masaru doesn't change his face to that. His gaze stays cold and distant. Ten minutes pass and Director Ichiro Harime enters the room, with snow on his coat.

"Director." Masaru greets Ichiro calm. Ichiro doesn't give an answer, he simply walks pass him.

"I've heard our factories have been attacked?" Masaru asks just as Ichiro walks around the corner. Ichiro peeks with his head behind the corner.

"How attentive of you."

"Did they fail?"

"Of course they failed. Oh, by the way, your best friend Inumuta, I met him. He's got a bad headache, you might want to calm him down, he's imprisoned in the factory near this stupid park. I suggest

you wait until the evening. Could be that these naked fanatics want to rescue him, if so, then maybe not, but you know, I leave that up to you, hmhmhm." he chuckles and leaves. Masaru raises his eyebrows as Ichiro leaves the room and enters the office.

A few minutes later, Masaru closes the suitcase. He puts his computers on standby and just as he wants to walk out, he notices that the door to the presidential office is still open. Curious, he walks into the office. Ichiro sits there with a book in his hand, not noticing Masaru entered the room. Masaru notices a small, transparent box, with a blue vial inside it. Seems like the cure Ichiro prepared for Ryuko.

"Interesting..." Masaru thinks and leaves the room again. He picks up the suitcase and enters the elevator.

"Nudist Beach will want to rescue Inumuta... I should get going..."

...

A door opens. Light floods Ryuko's room and blurs her vision as she tries to sleep. Senketsu jumps from the table and hops to the door. It's Mikisugi - he seems to be tired and rather calm than usual, he also wears a coat.

"... oh man, really...?" Ryuko gripes annoyed.

"Mornin' Ryuko. Look, we... we gotta get you to the medbay."

"... mmh, sure..."

"I know you're not too keen on the idea. I'm worried just like the others."

"Right."

"Wait, let me help you get up." the man offers and walks to Ryuko. Ryuko stays stubborn on her bed, while Senketsu has to watch helplessly in the background.

"Why can't you guys just... let me go?"

"We can't simply bring you to this maniac. You know exactly this is a trap." Mikisugi answers and waits until Ryuko stands up. While she continues to stay stubborn, she does not defend her bed. She can't do that anyway, she's too weak for that now. Mikisugi holds her and brings her out of the room with Senketsu who hangs on Ryuko's shoulders.

"I'll take a few of your items once you are in your room."

"Whatever." she answers. As they walk through the halls of the Nudist Beach base, they see Nonon sleeping in the command center, while around her, Tsumugu and Sanageyama talk. Ryuko can't even see properly anymore, it's like she lost glasses which she would need for proper vision.

"Mikisugi, tell me you guys have a plan." Senketsu asks worried.

"We're on it. This night a few of us visited some of those strange factories, we are still waiting for Houka and Hoomaru and then we'll see if we can develop some kind of cure for Ryuko."

"And that would be?" he asks.

"Iori might be able to replace her "corrupted" Life Fibers with new and fresh ones, that's our assumption." Mikisugi answers, although Senketsu notices how there's a seed of doubt in his words. Young Ryuko can't even understand him completely. As they enter the med bay, Satsuki walks pass them, and both sisters look into each others eyes, although Satsuki is the one who looks away briefly after.

"... the hell do you think you are doing, Satsuki?" Ryuko asks. Her voice is filled with disappointment and sadness. Sadness, that Satsuki apparently does not trust Ryuko enough. It just shows that Satsuki takes the role of the "big sister" too far.

"I can't let you die. That's all."

"But Mako?" Ryuko asks. Satsuki has a hard time finding the correct words. If there are any correct words at this point.

"I fought too long to give you up now."

"Give me up? You treat me... like an object! As if I had no free will!"

"You are no object, but you need help!"

"You think I don't want any help? I don't wanna die god damn it! But I also don't want my best friend to die! She doesn't have ANYTHING to do with all of this, and this crap ass bastard risks her life!"

"I know, Ryuko! What should I do?! Try to understand me for once, please!"

"Try to understand me! I get why you act like this, but you only think for yourself! Again!"

"No, Ryuko, I'm thinking about both of us."

"Yeah, I can see that."

Suddenly they hear Gamagoori march towards them. He's dragging Nui with her so that she can't cause any harm as long as she is outside the dorms, instead, he has to keep an eye on her. It seems as if he heard the griping of the two sisters, but it's probably just his sense of pride and protection towards Lady Satsuki.

"Matoi, it's enough!" he yells. Ryuko looks at Gamagoori annoyed.

"And what do you want?!"

"Your sister is worried about you and you do not even try to comprehend her situation! You should be ashamed of yourself."

"No, you should be ashamed! Doesn't anyone... understand me here anymore?!"

"Move it, Matoi!"

"This is Mako, god damn it! She's gonna die!" Ryuko screams at Satsuki, Mikisugi and Gamagoori.

"You guys really are stupid, you know that?" Nui mumbles.

"Say again?"

"You heard me right, dickhead. And you guys call me the bad guy here." Nui reacts surprised. Just as Gamagoori wants to escort Ryuko with Mikisugi to the medbay, Sanageyama runs towards them.

"Satsuki!" he yells.

"Uzu?"

"Houka and Hoomaru, they, we, we just got a message!"

"What is it?!" she asks hopeful while the others listen to Sanageyama.

"... they both didn't return. Neo-REVOCS got them, they are apparently in that factory they attacked, if we can't get to them soon they are busted from the looks of it!"

"What!?"

"This Director asshole's got a radio of us and send us a message, shit, he's still here, if you want to listen!" Sanageyama answers and shows Satsuki the radio. Satsuki takes a deep breath in and out of her nose to get rid of the sudden feel of fury she just experienced, and then she listens.

"Kiryuin!" Ichiro laughs satisfied and looks around in the empty room he is.

"You..." Satsuki reacts threatening.

"You seem to be in a bad mood, why is that? You happen to have a bad conversation with your sister? I'm listening, I can be your therapist, if you want! The big Gamagoori screams like a fool, little Nui calls everyone stupid, and Ryuko seems to feel badly treated. You must be a very bad big sister."

"... ha. Ha."

"Alright well look, I can give your friends a few hours since the factory is still working on another load, but if you're not fast enough, I guess they are dead and food for the Life Fibers, they really love snacks. Oh and keep in mind that your sister is in a pretty bad shape, I think if she isn't here until tomorrow next night, she's gonna get unconscious and if she is unconscious, I don't have any use for her, and THAT would mean her strange hyperactive friend Mako Mankanshoku will have to die, isn't it so, Mako?!" he asks Ichiro and looks at Mako who stands next to her with a scared look.

"Mankanshoku!?"

"Mako and I, we watched your conversation in excitement, think we've been watching briefly before you and Ryuko met. Wait, are you crying, Mako? Ahahaha!"

"Mako, I, I didn't mean to..." Satsuki tries to apologize but then she can hear how Ichiro slaps Mako.

"GET YOUR DAMN SISTER INTO THIS FUCKING BUILDING OR WILL SLAUGHTER MANKANSHOKU, IS THAT CLEAR ENOUGH!?" he screams and destroys the radio.

With that, Satsuki looks up to the others, bites her teeth together and looks at Mikisugi evil.

"Get Ryuko to the medbay, right now! I need a few men to burn down this factory!"

"Let me help, I know how to burn..." Nui interrupts.

"You ain't going nowhere, Harime, keep your mouth shut!"

"They got Hoomaru! MY Hoomaru! MY friend!"

"She's my friend too!"

"Then let me go with you! What the hell have I done this time, Satsuki?! You act as if I am a monster!"

"Because you are one. Gamagoori, bring her away!" Satsuki answers and walks with Sanageyama to the command center, while Nui and Gamagoori walk to the workshop. Ryuko is brought away by Mikisugi...

...

Houka sits in a dark room. It's completely empty and cold. It must be the one Hoomaru investigated a few hours ago. Just one white light is visible on the other end of it, and every once in a while, he can hear Life Fibers crawling around on the walls. It seems as if they talk, as he notices a certain rhythm in the sounds they make, but of course, Houka does not understand them. The man waits several more minutes until a door opens partially. It's a Couturier that looks at Houka. The Couturier removes his mask, and his true face appears - a Life Fiber being. It's eyes are, just like the ones of the other Life Fiber beings, dead and empty, unable to show any kind of emotion. As Houka see's the monster, he crawls behind as the alien walks towards him.

"The hell... is this..."

"Follow..." the monster orders in a distant sounding human voice. It's a wonder it can talk like that at all. The masks must have some kind of translation device so that they can communicate with humans. As the young man leaves the room, it's revealed that he is completely naked... just like everyone else in the large hall. He now notices dozens of people and Hoomaru, all of them having no clothes. Couturiers guard the overpass with a few Ashigaru, but there is no

sign of Samurai. Now he can also see a monitor above the entrance gate to the hall that displays the amount of Life Fibers collected.

"That's the last load!" a Couturier yells to the other. Houka's pulse rises, he walks to Hoomaru.

"Any idea what this is?!" Houka asks shocked.

"I... never saw anything like this... in my entire life." she mumbles.

"Move it!" a Couturier yells. The people around Houka and Hoomaru are led away. Capsules open up - inside of them, Life Fibers. Ashigaru collect and store them into barrels and crates, then the people are put into said capsules. A Couturier walks towards Houka and Hoomaru.

"The Director has ordered you both will choose."

"Choose? Choose what?!" Houka asks.

"Who of you will be processed."

...

With that, Houka and Hoomaru realize what and how Ichiro produces Life Fibers. Fear conquers their bodies. Both don't give an answer. They wouldn't betray each other.

Then, the Couturier drags one of them with him...

...

"So how are we going to attack that facility?!" Sanageyama asks while he walks with Nonon, Mikisugi and Satsuki to the starting helicopter.

"Ain't much time to plan, Sanageyama, we have to attack them directly and without mercy."

"Directly?! Hell I love a challenge but what if they kill them?!"

"They won't, and we don't have time to plan much anyway."

"Fine, alright, but then we gotta take Gamagoori with us." Mikisugi suggests and reloads his needle rifle.

"Then we have to pickup our psychopath too."

"I won't allow Harime to co..."

"Oh for fuck sake, Satsuki!" Nonon gripes annoyed and grabs Satsuki.

"I'm not a large fan of that clown either, but she saved my damn ass and even gave me HER clones because she trusts me enough, I think IF we need someone right now, then her!"

"Get off of me." Satsuki orders. Nonon let's off Satsuki.

"Fine. And I trust you. Quick." Satsuki reacts, although she really isn't a huge fan of the idea and climbs with the others in the helicopter. Sanageyama and Mikisugi watch her in distrust. Even if Satsuki's wrath is justified, it's obvious that she can't really control herself. She sits down on the other end of the helicopter. Suddenly, her mother Ragyo appears next to her, watching her daughter patient.

"Look at you. You seem to be annoyed?"

"Shut up."

Sanageyama and Mikisugi hear that.

"It looks like your world is falling apart. You need to try to keep your resolve. Ah, but who am I talking with? You know that, probably." Ragyo slightly chuckles in joy and leaves again. Satsuki slams her fist against the bank she sits on.

...

In the meantime, Masaru drives with a quick car from Neo-REVOCS HQ to the factory Houka and Hoomaru are captured at. Next to him lies the suitcase with the documents he received, but more than that - documents about every Neo-REVOCS facility, the amount of units they possess, evidence from the factories that can remove Neo-REVOCS disguise towards humanity, murders, partially by Ichiro himself and more.

"Faster, Yamamoto..." he mumbles to himself.

...

Two hours later...

...

Satsuki and the rest of the group advance through the forest around the factory. Tall black walls and watch towers surround the factory in which Life Fibers are produced. Nui and Mikisugi aim at the guards on the watch towers, whileas Sanageyama draws his blade and Nonon's musician clones get in position. Satsuki makes a hand sign, causing Gamagoori to move forward onto the open road so that the Ashigaru on the tower notice the tall shield of Lady Satsuki. He looks at the with an judging gaze. A Couturier leaves the gate that leads into the factory and watches Gamagoori.

"Another human that dares to face the horrors of this breed place." the Couturier greets Gamagoori. Gamagoori, who has his "Protector Regalia" activated, walks towards the factory and grows larger with every step... and with every step, his fury grows stronger as well.

"Kill him." the Couturier orders. The Ashigaru, just as they attempt to fire, are however shot by Nui and Mikisugi, and in that moment, the Couturier watches at the forest with a perplexed stance. Satsuki and the rest of the group leave the forest and walk behind Gamagoori who grabs the, now about eight meter tall man.

"HOW COULD YOU THINK I CAN BE CHALLENGED THAT EASILY!?" Gamagoori screams and aims with one finger towards Tokyo.

"FEAR THE POWER OF MY RESOLVE!" he continues and throws the Couturier away with an speed and power, so strong, that the Couturier actually slams through the walls of the presidential office, landing directly in front of Ichiro who was just about to sit down.

"Ma... master..."

Ichiro grins happily to that and looks out of the hole. Must have been one hell of a throw as he thinks.

"You gotta love this man." Ichiro grins.

Eventually, Gamagoori proceeds to destroy the factory walls, and slamming a hole into the roof which allows Satsuki and the others to climb into said factory. Gamagoori picks them up one by one and helps them get into said building, and quickly, they find themselves back in the overseer's office where a few Couturier and Ashigaru are located. Harime's henchmen are quickly overwhelmed by the group, thanks to Satsuki and Sanageyama who can deal well with the Couturiers now, especially since Junketsu's power lives in Satsuki's blade. Nonon's musician clones cause havoc with their music and distract the Ashigaru from the others so that Nui and Mikisugi can deal with the Ashigaru. As the largest part of them are eliminated, both of them run to the cameras and look at them.

"Got an idea where your Doppelgänger would keep them as hostage?"

"I'd send them to the most cruel place in the factory."

"You know these factories?"

"Nopey-di nope nope!"

"Great." Mikisugi answers and switches between the various cameras. Several capsule rooms are in the factory. Ashigaru guard the rooms, but the Couturiers seem to have disappeared for the most part.

"Leave those weird computers behind, god damn it, love!" Nui yells and pushes Mikisugi aside as the Ashigaru open fire on him and Nui, avoiding a hit.

"Thanks." Mikisugi answers. Satsuki attacks the Ashigaru, Sanageyama runs down the stairs to search for Houka and Hoomaru. Nonon and her clones follow him briefly after, Nui does the same. Mikisugi takes a different path and arrives on an overpass that has a great sight over the main hall that seemingly leads to the various capsule rooms and other parts of the facility. Ashigaru fire at Sanageyama and Nonon who stay in cover, and for that, Mikisugi takes a grenade he had on his belt attached, throwing it down to the Ashigaru. The explosion is strong enough to take most of them out, but eventually, the Ashigaru concentrate their fire on him and hit his shoulder, causing him to bleed.

"Ah damn it!" he mumbles and takes a few steps back. Satsuki joins the battle and clears the room with blue waves she loads up via her sword. Gamagoori kicks open the door and enters the facility, joining the others, but just as they are about to split up, another door opens and a hellish scream is audible.

"The fuck is this!?" Nonon screams shocked. A monstrous Life Fiber Being consisting of several Life Fibers crawls out of the room, with the Life Fiber Beings being... somehow, glued, or fused into each other, and it's look reminds a bit of Senketsu when Ryuko lost control over her body... but it's clear that this is a literal abomination, screaming with tortured voices that want blood. Life Fibers crawl out of it and attack the group.

"Man, this thing is ugly as hell!" Sanageyama reacts and jumps aside as the monster tries to attack him.

"When I get this piece of trash of an Director I'll play him a melody that will haunt him to hell and beyond that!" Nonon gripes and attacks with her guitar and the music of the clones. The music stuns the monster slightly, allowing Gamagoori, Sanageyama and Satsuki to attack in melee combat. Mikisugi in the meantime arrived at Nui who is sitting behind a cover consisting of a few crates.

"And what is that thing, Harime?!" Mikisugi asks. Nui seems to recognize it.

"A "sick" experiment Lady Ragyo once planned but never got to finish, aha!" Nui laughs, but more worried than actually happy.

"Can we harm it?"

"Yup, just don't know how!" Nui answers smiling and shrinks her Fiber Rifle, then she runs towards it and rams her arms into it to look for weak spots, but just as she notices a weak thread inside it, she's grabbed by the abomination and thrown against a wall. Satsuki however is able to slash off one of it's many arms, and thanks to Nui's attempt, Satsuki gets an idea on how to combat the monster.

"Harime! Nonon! Look for Inumuta and Nonon, NOW!" Satsuki orders. Nui and Nonon stand up and avoid the monster. Both of them enter two different halls. Nui meets up with a Couturier, the one that apparently runs this facility, which she can see on the white and red clothes, while the other Couturiers wear clothes with colors of all kind. Also, there is a Neo-REVOCS sign on the robe the Life Fiber Being wears. The Couturier throws away it's mask and faces off Nui as Life Fiber Being, talking in the language of them which Nui understands of course.

"Look at you, you traitor!" the Life Fiber being jokes over Nui. Nui grabs her weapon and literally annihilates the Life Fiber Being with a devastator round she shot. Then she stomps over the Being.

"You ain't going to kill my friend, you worthless clown." she mumbles annoyed and runs through the halls.

Gamagoori in the meantime grabs the Life Fiber monster's arms which then starts to try to pierce his armor. Gamagoori does start to bleed, but the pierce attacks aren't strong enough to seriously hurt him.

"YOU WILL NOT HURT LADY SATSUKI AND HER COMPANIONS AS LONG AS I LIVE!" Gamagoori yells and performs a serious punch attack against one of the monster's heads, decapitating it. The musician clones jump at the monster and seek for a weakness just like their mistress did moments ago. With their fingers, they find loose threads which Satsuki then cuts apart, while Sanageyama and Gamagoori parry the monster's attacks. As more and more threads are cut and the monster loses its strength, its colors vanish slowly, and the heart, consisting of many different looking hearts, appear. Gamagoori rips open a path to the hearts, and then, Satsuki and Sanageyama pierce their swords into it, ripping it then apart, and with that, the monster screams unbelievably loud and explodes into thousands of dead Life Fibers. Some of them disappear, others stay on the ground. A last echo halls through the facility, and then, the monster is gone.

"Fucking hell." Sanageyama mentions.

"Let's split up!" Satsuki orders, and the group runs into different halls. Seems like there aren't many Neo-REVOCS defenders left, except for a few dozen of Ashigaru scattered all around the facility. Satsuki and Mikisugi can only find empty rooms however.

"HOUKA!" Nonon yells and kicks open the next door in front of her.

"REI!" Nui screams and runs through the halls until she finds a room with capsules, and just as she enters it, Ashigaru open their fire. Nui's leg and shoulder is hit, but she doesn't care and moves on, eliminating the Ashigaru one by one. Nonon in the meantime searches for her friend desperately, and the clones that are with her help her as well. They investigate everything, rooms, closets, look under tables, everywhere. Eventually, Nonon finds a large closed gate with a 12 above it on a monitor.

"WE GOTTA OPEN THAT DOOR!" Nonon orders. The clones start playing music to damage the door. Nonon plays loud and aggressive music while in the room behind she can hear people scream scared. Sanageyama finds a similar door as well and tries to open it somehow.

"REI HOOMARU!?" Nui yells and kills the last Ashigaru, then she looks around. The capsules around her have green lights, meaning they are active. They create loud, machine like sounds, and some sort of liquid flowing. The young psychopath looks for a way to deactivate those capsules, and she finds a way quickly when she notices a large control panel. As Nui tries to deactivate the capsules, she is attacked by more Ashigaru who land a hit on her, tearing her left face apart with a bullet. Nui does fall down, but survives due to her will and fires back.

"MORE! I WANT ALL OF NEO-REVOCS TO HEAR THIS!" Nonon screams full of anger and as the gate starts screeching and moving, the clones run at it and use drums and trumpets to finally destroy it. The gate explodes and shatters into thousands of parts. Smoke rises up.

Nui kills the last Ashigaru and slams her fist on the control panel, and briefly after, the capsules deactivate, the lights go out and blur her vision briefly. Her face only very slowly regenerates. Nui lays down her weapon and looks around. She can sense Life Fibers all around her. A gate opens to her right side - the one that leads to the room Houka was hours ago. As she looks into the room, she can see scared humans, but no sign of Hoomaru. And as the humans see Nui, they don't even dare to look at her.

"DON'T HURT US, PLEASE!" a young woman yells.

"I ain't gonna hurt you, I..."

"YOU ARE JUST LIKE THEM!"

"... I'm not one of them."

"BUT YOU LOOK LIKE ONE!" a man yells. Nui slowly regenerates her face. Then, she can hear the capsules behind her slowly open.

As the smoke in Nonon's room goes away, the clones and Nonon run into the room. It's a large hall in which another group of humans are, all of them afraid.

One of them is Houka. Nonon runs at him worried and hugs him.

"INU!" she yells scared and hold her afraid friend who moves his head onto Nonon's shoulders.

"No-n-n-n..."

"Hey, hey, hey! I'm here, Inu! It's all going to be okay!"

"N-no... they... they..."

"You don't have to be afraid anymore."

...

As the capsules open, red smoke rises up that fills up the room slightly and then disappears, and as it disappears, humans fall out of the capsules...

...

... although they can only barely be recognized as such. Nui looks around, her hair and one side of her face covered with blood.

Some of the humans in the around forty capsules still look like humans, other... look like as if they would have been eaten. As if something would have tried to devour their body slowly. As she takes a closer look, she realizes that there is no flesh in the wounds, but Life Fibers... Life Fibers that slowly reproduce themselves in the human bodies. Realizing this, her eyes grow larger, people start crying out of pain, but one scream she definitely recognizes, and Nui

quickly runs to the right side where she finds Hoomaru in one of those capsules.

Hoomaru falls out of the capsule, half dead. She is completely broken - physical and mentally. Nui grabs her with her ice cold arms. Blood falls onto Nui's hands and arms. Blood that belongs to Hoomaru.

Then, Nui musters Hoomaru - her body has been corroded by the Life Fibers. Her belly is open, and inside, the blood lusty alien beings which Nui is one of them scream for more. Life Fiber threads keep Hoomaru alive. The sheer gaze on Hoomaru is painful. Her upper head was disintegrated, blood leaves her body on so many spots, it's... cruel. Hoomaru whimpers scared with tears in her eyes while Nui looks at her dying friend with a cold, neutral look.

"Rei..." Nui mumbles.

"It.. hurts, it... it hurts..." Hoomaru cries scared. Nui doesn't know how to react.

"They... they... make Life... Fibers... out of us, they... pro-process us, processed me, it hurts..." and then, Hoomaru coughs blood, and a few Life Fibers leave her mouth, sucking up the blood. Around Nui, more people die due to their wounds.

"I didn't wanted you to do this, Rei."

"... I didn't... go... because I was... angry at you... I would have went away... anyway... *coughs*"

"Shhh... I shouldn't have attacked you, Rei. I could have been here. I'm just stupid."

"... it... ain't your fault..."

"But Rei, I..."

"Listen... carefully, pl-please..." Hoomaru asks with tears in her eyes. Her entire body shivers out of the coldness around her, and the pain, and the blood, and the wounds...

"... you... always... were supposed to be... a monster... but I know you're not... one..."

"But Rei, I..."

"Listen... please... for once."

"..."

"I... never knew... if I could really help you... and when I saw you again... after so many years..."

"..."

"... but I wanted to try it, I... really wanted to, just like S-Satsuki... but I guess I failed... and, b-but Nui..."

"..."

"..."

"... you... may be bad... but not evil... not anymore... I know you are not... because Ragyo... is gone..."

"..."

"... your mother... always wanted... a monster, a loy-al weapon... *coughs* but now she... is gone... and you still have a family... your sis... ters, and they..." Hoomaru cries. More Life Fibers leave her body.

"You... are no monster... I... just wish... I could have seen it... with my own eyes..."

"Rei..."

"I... just want... to know one thing..." Hoomaru mumbles with her last power.

"I... just wonder... for years, if behind all of those... Life... Fibers... and the personality... and the blood... if there still is... my little troublemaker..." Hoomaru cries. Nui hesitates at first and then looks at her wounds. Nui removes the Life Fibers out of her belly to reduce the pain.

"I... of course I am..." Nui answers with a light smile and then raises her head. Nui drags a yellow shining Life Fiber out of her finger and carefully strings it into Hoomaru's open head where the brain is visible already. Hoomaru smiles by that answer.

"You... always said you wanted to visit this park... I'm sure the place where humans go when they die... is much nicer than the place where people like me have to go. Don't be afraid, Rei. I'll stay here."

"I... *chuckles*... knew it... I knew it, I... your mother really has not... I... you... you really are... still here... my little... troublemaker... is still... still..."

...

Hoomaru's head leans to the side.

Hoomaru's voice disappears.

Hoomaru's last breath is audible.

Hoomaru is dead.

The Life Fibers inside her lose their lights and dissolve. Nui turns Hoomaru's head around. Tears still roll down, but a slight smile is visible.

"I'm sorry, little Rei." Nui says. There she is. Kneeling in front of her dead friend, unable to show emotions. Only a cold, apathetic face

expression... that is all. The blood on her hands speaks a clear language. Satsuki and Sanageyama enter the room.

"Harime!" Satsuki yells. Satsuki and Sanageyama look around. Dead people everywhere, and Life Fibers that leave the capsules. Satsuki approaches Nui and looks over her shoulder. She puts her sword back into the sword sheath. Nui looks up to Satsuki.

"She's dead." Nui says. No emotion. No feeling. Just a simple "She's dead." Satsuki doesn't react. She nods slightly and then looks to Sanageyama. Briefly after, the rest of the group appears...

...

Masaru arrives at the factory and looks around, with the suitcase in his hand. As he runs into the factory, he finally sees for himself all the destruction caused by the Director. The factory feels so cold, dead and empty. There aren't even sounds anymore. Just snow falling from the sky, and a very quiet wind outside. It's evening now. He does notice however trails of another car that seems to have driven away a few minutes ago.

"Nudist Beach." he thinks and follows the trails with his car.

...

Shovels can be heard. Cold snow falls from the sky. Everything is so white, so calm. All that is left are a few clones that dig a grave. Nui stands in the middle of a forest in the national park near the factory. Satsuki and the others went back to the Nudist Beach base some time ago. Only Nui is left and lets her clones shovel a grave, while Nui herself holds up her parasol. As the clones slowly finish up Hoomaru's grave, Nui hears a car arriving. She turns around. It's Masaru who approaches Nui with his red coat and the suitcase. He also notices a blanket in which Hoomaru's corpse is under.

Stomp.

Stomp.

Stomp.

"... Rei Hoomaru?"

"..."

Masaru lays down the suitcase onto the snow and walks a few steps back. Snow falls onto his hair and the glasses. Stars are visible in the sky.

"I'm sorry for what happened, Grand Couturier. I had to face death into it's eyes too to understand what I am doing."

"..."

"The cure is real. I can help Matoi. You... can help Matoi. Bring her to Neo-REVOCS. I will make sure she can flee once she got it. We both have to try to do our best for our species."

"... I'm not a human."

"So is Matoi. I think it doesn't matter what you consist of. All that counts is you as a person. Your Doppelgänger is a monster. But you obviously are not."

"..."

"I don't know any psychopath that would dig a grave for their friend they always treated badly.

You are one. And still better than the rest." Masaru answers and walks back to the car.

"This suitcase has everything you need to reveal REVOCS' deeds to the world. Do the right thing, Grand Couturier. We both will die sooner or later. Let's make sure we die as persons people will remember with a smile"

Masaru drives away. Nui turns back to the grave. Snow falls into it. The clones slowly start to dig it up again after moving Hoomaru into it. Nui still stands there, with her parasol in her hand which protects her from the world - protecting her from the snow... protecting her from the rain...

Just like years ago. Blood leaves her face, for she just lost her left eye to Isshin Matoi.

"Go away! I don't need your help! Unless you want me to kill you!" Nui threatens.

"Who do you think you are!?"

"For the one that will survive when the time comes, Hoomaru!"

"Pff."

Nui hits Hoomaru. She leaves the room. Satsuki notices Nui who is sitting in her room.

...

Nui see's herself back in the Kiryuin Manor all of a sudden, in the middle of a garden full of wonderful flowers. It's raining. So much you could say the world is sinking. She just stands there with her parasol, and her eyepatch. The parasol protects her from the rain. Makes sure she never gets soaked.

"This is my gift to you. Your own parasol. It will serve as your haven for this cruel, strange world we live in. Do not trust humans, do not talk with them, and do not show the few emotions that reside in you, for emotions make us weak. Your parasol will protect you, and you will protect the parasol. A pure, perfect being like you shall not be stained by the environment of this disgusting world." she hears Ragyo's words halling in her head.

Now she knows why Ragyo gave her the parasol. For the first time in her life, she now knows why she truly got it, and why she never cried after the day she got it anymore.

Nui throws the parasol into the grave, and her eye patch which she got by Lady Ragyo.

Ragyo hated weaklings. Crying makes people weak. The perfect Being shouldn't cry. And she knew Nui loved rain, for rain covered her tears. But as long as she used the parasol, she couldn't cry. It would make her look weak.

"I guess I am weak then, Mama. You liar..." she mumbles about her mother. Nui then grabs the shovel and digs up the last amounts of snow and dirt. The clones row up behind Nui, then, one of them walks forward and shrinks for her mistress. Nui lays the little clone onto Hoomaru's grave, in the middle of the park Hoomaru always wanted to visit. In the nature, where Hoomaru always wanted to be, nature, the place she always loved.

"You were a good friend, Hoomaru."

...

AN: A lot of stuff happened today. Hoomaru is dead, Ichiro's plan seems to be revealed, Satsuki becomes stranger, and Ryuko will die if no one does anything. Took a while to finish the chapter but now it's done. I'll be honest: The part where I had to write Hoomaru's death and the ending, it honestly made me tear up. I wonder if you cried too or if I hit the feels somewhere, let me know! One thing is sure: if I did hit the feels, I can promise this was not the last time. Twelve more chapters, we slowly but steadily get closer to the end of the story. As always, thanks for reading, I'm glad y'all are here, I wish all of you a beautiful Christmas (little fun fact, the final chapters play around Christmas, so yeah :D) and I hope to see you all either next year if I can't finish Chapter 19 before the end of the year. And if I do finish it, well, I'll just say I will end the year with an Chapter ending

you won't forget. Alright, see y'all next time in Chapter 19: "Facing Darkness, With a Brave Heart"...

Facing Darkness, With a Brave Heart 1-2

AN: Ready for Chapter 19? It's one of my favorite chapters of the entire story. Gonna be very exciting today. And yup, you see it right, this is the first part, this chapter will be a two-parter! Maybe I can drop part 2 next week, if not, I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy new year! But I assume I can get part 2 done as well. Alright, enough talking! Let's see what happens today... certainly some emotional stuff. As always, I'm grateful for a review and excited to know your opinion!

Voices hall.

"You can't stay here anymore."

"You have to go."

"You are a threat for this village."

"Who knows if this disease spreads?"

"You could have killed her!"

"This is the fifth time IN A WEEK!"

"You need to go."

"You need to go."

"You need to go."

...

"Ryuko?"

"... Mako?"

"... I'm so sorry."

"... me too."

Tap. Tap. Tap. A door opens. It leads into an empty, dark room. Ryuko enters it, and suddenly, the door closes by itself, and a chuckling is audible.

"Mhmhm..."

"... where are you..."

Ryuko looks around. Here and there she can hear water flowing. Then, in the distance, there is a sparkle that slowly hovers around the room, until it seems to incite a small fire. As Ryuko walks towards the fire, she hears rain falling. The fire spreads all over a black wall in front of her that feels like silk, and after a few seconds, a place behind that fire is revealed. The place where it all started.

The Matoi Mansion.

Carefully, Ryuko walks through the gap that was caused by the fire, and behind it, she can feel heavy rain falling onto her jacket. In the sky is a large, monstrous appearing Life Fiber construct consisting of white and black Life Fibers. Then, she hears another chuckle and turns around.

Behind her is Nui who sunk her head slightly to the ground, chuckling and holding the parasol up. Her black arms suddenly appear monstrous and scary, just like everything on her, but one thing is even more noticable.

Blood leaves the left side of her face which is covered by her blonde hair.

"Do you know where we Life Fibers go when we die?" she asks slowly and careful.

Ryuko feels heavy and exhausted, can't properly talk, only listen and watch Nui. Nui starts looking up a tad bit higher. Her face is still covered by the parasol, but now a dirty, playful smile is visible.

"We always go to the place we remember the best. Do you miss your daddy?"

"..."

"I miss my mama."

Coldness wraps Ryuko's body, her skin slowly turns pale.

"Tick. Tack. Tick. Tack. Tick. Tack..."

... soon, you are dead...

... tick. Tack. Tick. Tack..."

And the world starts colliding, by dragging into Ryuko's head with high speed, until everything disappears and a brief, but indescribable pain flows through her body, and finally, a grey light appears in her eyes. And as she blinks, she wakes up, but looking around is difficult. She can her medical devices around her that watch her heart and brain activity. Iori stands to her right and covers the light a bit, with Senketsu sitting on the left.

"I'm almost done, Senketsu." Iori answers. He seems uncalm - no signs of sweat, but if Iori is uncalm, it can't be a good sign anymore.

"Ryuko? Are you still there? Please blink twice!" the Kamui asks. Ryuko blinks two times slowly.

"Oh god, good, you are still here. Ryuko, Iori isn't done yet with his examination." Senketsu explains. Ryuko can't really answer, or look up. Senketsu in the meantime watches Iori as he carefully takes a look at Ryuko's organs in the hope the corrupted Entity Fiber isn't only in the brain area.

"Lady Satsuki hasn't come back yet but I've heard there have been news. I'm sure we have something for you in a few hours, Ryuko." Iori mentions.

"Give me the needle, please, Senketsu."

Ryuko breathes in deeply. She hates needles. They scare her. Senketsu nods and hops to a nearby table, then, after two attempts, he is able to catch a needle which he gives Iori. With that, Iori sews Ryuko's open body parts together again.

"So it must be the brain." he considers quietly.

"Can you do something?"

"No, I... Ryuko could die. I'd have to know exactly where I need to look at."

"Then let's wait for what her sister Satsuki says."

"Is that okay for you, Ryuko?" Iori asks.

Ryuko nods slowly. Iori continues with the sewing but notices her body regenerates anyway, and after a few minutes, one could think she hasn't been operated at all. Eventually, Iori helps Ryuko laying down to make her feel a bit more comfortable in the bed. On the other side of the bed is the door, and above the door, a clock. The room feels cold and is, apart from the few devices, quiet.

"Would you like to eat or drink something, Ryuko?" Iori asks. Ryuko only watches the clock. She isn't thinking of anything else anymore. If she could, she would stand up and run to Neo-REVOCS to save Mako. It doesn't matter anymore. That's the only thing that is important now. But there is this clock. And it's ticking. And it's cruel. 10:35 PM now. Ryuko shakes her head. Iori leaves the room, but you can see he is just as helpless as she is.

"Ryuko... do you want to talk a bit?"

"... n-no..."

"... okay." Senketsu answers and hops next to Ryuko to warm her up. Ryuko can't move her head properly to Senketsu, but he still tries to help her somehow.

...

Weak lights enlighten the streets Nui drives on. She's driving through Ôsaka, taking the route through the Dotonbori district as it's a faster way to reach Okishima island on which the Nudist Beach base lies on. Hoomaru's and her own blood is still on her body, dried out.

Normally she would just suck it up with her Life Fiber body, just like every good Life Fiber would. But that would go too far. Next to her lies the suitcase Masaru left her in the forest. She hasn't opened it yet. Since she drives a car from Neo-REVOCS, the humans around her and Takarada's men on the rooftops watch her very carefully, and Nui notices that. The blackened windows make it more difficult to see who's driving the car. Inside the car is a radio with which she could theoretically listen on what Neo-REVOCS troops are doing at the moment, but right now it's quiet. After thirty more minutes, Nui reaches the island after driving through a few more forests.

Headlights and watch towers aim onto Nui until she leaves the car, watching her allies with a cold, empty look. The men and women of the base lower their weapons and open the gate to allow Nui to enter the base. She parks the car in the garage near a shortcut that leads to an underground tunnel which brings people to the dormitories or the platform the Zeppelin is built on.

Even though a lot is going on this late, everything feels much calmer now. And as she see's all the humans around her, the one thing she doesn't feel anymore is bloodlust. As if it's not necessary anymore. It's... almost... as if punishment for them is not necessary. Killing... is not necessary. Live, and let live. In any case, Nui enters, full of blood, the main hall which has gotten rather quiet though compared to what is going on at the entrance. Here and there is a single guard patrolling the area, but that's it already. Wordless, Nui walks to the

command center where she finds Tsumugu who's smoking a cigarette, looking at Nui. He musters her in distrust. His face tells Nui she is a monster. A maniac. Who cares. Nui continues to the dormitories with the suitcase, and in one room, she can hear someone whimper. It seems to be Houka. And then, she hears Nonon's voice. The door is a small gap wide open hence why she decides to peek into it. Nonon sits there on Houka's bed with him, comforting the poor, scared guy.

"It's okay, Inu. You are safe here. No one's gonna hurt you."

"... they... just took her and put her into that... that capsule. One... of them showed us what happened before... and then after... it's... as if they would have been clothes themselves... no blood, and, and the skin..."

"I know. I saw it." Nonon says and hugs him.

"... why do monsters like these... even exist..."

"... I don't know. Lay... lay down, please."

"This... maniac, he... and I could have been that too..."

"But you weren't. Inu, please, lay down." she says once again and hugs Houka one more time. He's wearing fresh sleep clothes. Slowly, Houka lays down, Nonon covers him with a warm and comfortable blanket.

"... what... if they come over here...?" he mumbles. Nonon waits a brief moment.

"If you want I can stay here until you are asleep."

"That... would... be very nice..." he stutters.

"Okay. Don't worry. Give me ten or fifteen minutes, then I'll be here again." she says. Houka nods scared. Nui eventually walks away

from the door and opens the door to her own room. As Nui tries to walk in, Nonon appears and see's her. Both look at each other.

"... so... sorry for what happened with you and Rei." Nonon mumbles, unsure whether Nui even takes comments like those, after all, it's difficult talking with her. Nui watches Nonon empathyless.

"She isn't gone. Just dead." Nui answers cold.

"What do you mean?"

Followed by that question, Nui tips her finger against her head two times briefly. Nonon nods to that.

"I see. Well... good night... Nui." Nonon says and is about to walk away quickly, but Nui notices that.

"... you look busy, where are you going and where is Satsuki, I want to talk with her."

"I'm going to her, actually."

"I'm coming with you then."

"I don't think Satsuki is in the best mood right now and you know how she is when she see's you." Nonon explains.

"She never wants to see me, my dear." Nui answers and enters her room with the suitcase in her hand.

"Nighty." Nui says cold. Nonon leaves the dormitories, and as she does, Nui leaves her room again and follows her quietly. She walks through the blue lightened up halls of the medbay. Near the room where Ryuko lies at is the control room. Nonon enters said control room. Inside the room are several monitors that give an oversight of each patients status, and Ryuko's doesn't look good anymore. Satsuki, Mikisugi, Gamagoori, Iori and a few guards stand around here. Iori is speaking to Satsuki from the looks of it. Nonon hasn't

noticed Nui following her. Again, Nui waits at the door, still full of blood, denying to suck it up like a Life Fiber.

"... I've examined these Life Fibers. Yes. There is human DNA. All Life Fibers that have been stolen from Neo-REVOCS... they all were humans at one point. I... I don't even know how to react on that, I... I am just speechless." Iori says.

"Can we save Ryuko with them?" Satsuki asks impatient.

"I... don't think so."

Something dawns inside Satsuki, and briefly after in the others as well. Slowly, Nui opens the door, still listening.

"What does that mean... "I don't think so?" she asks.

"The... Life Fibers are not compatible with Ryuko. Something... pushes them away. I've tried it a few hours ago. It's probably this corrupted Entity Thread. It must be inside her brain, but I can't get to it. Operating her there would most probably kill here."

"... Iori." Satsuki begs. Finding words is getting more and more difficult now.

"So all of this was pointless?" Nui asks annoyed. The others turn around.

"Ryuko's dying away because you couldn't think straight. We probably have an unnecessary amount of casualties, not that I care much about them, but more humans equal more weapons. Now Hoomaru is dead, and my stupid Doppelgänger has this annoying brat Mako." Nui continues, walking towards Iori and Satsuki.

"So what is our next amazing plan from which we don't know if it works at all or not, hm? We could play some incredibly stupid games with Neo-REVOCS! How about we rob some convoys and call it "Robbers and gendarmes"? Or we destroy another big factory! Look

at this!" Nui says and lays down the suitcase, opening it. Several hundreds of documents are inside them. Mikisugi takes a look at them with Satsuki.

"So while you guys were whining about how to heal someone that cannot be healed with ordinary means, I gave my friend a proper grave and this weirdo Mr. Yamamoto left me this sweet sweet present with which we could completely destroy Neo-REVOCS" Nui gripes.

"..."

"Oh." she continues and looks into Satsuki's eyes.

"He also said the cure exists. We should bring her to Neo-REVOCS and plan out a way to rescue her, if you ask me.

That would be rational.

Unlike what you have in your mind the entire damn time.

Lady Satsuki." Nui mocks. Satsuki smiles very briefly and uppish.

"You think you are so clever."

"I am clever enough to see the opportunity, my dear."

"She won't go to Neo-REVOCS."

"Great! We could shovel her a grave if you want! How about this stupid mansion her dad used to live in?"

"Begone, Harime." Satsuki orders. Gamagoori walks towards Nui and grabs her hand, Nui punches him away though and aims her finger at Satsuki.

"You will kill her if you don't bring Ryuko to Neo-REVOCS, why don't you understand that?! I just want to help!"

"You want to help by giving our enemy exactly what they want?!"

"Yamamoto told me he can help us! I know this isn't a great plan either, but RYUKO HERSELF wants this too! Don't you have any respect for her!?"

"Respect?! She's my little sister."

"And I'm not worth listening to, right? Because I'm just clothing, disguised as a human? If you'd had any respect for "your little sister", you'd listen to her problems and help her, but hey, I understand, I love myself too! But we aren't talking about some expendable friend. We are talking about Ryuko."

"Guys, calm down." Mikisugi orders and tries to intervene.

"Gamagoori, bring her back into her room and place guards there, if she tries to leave it without my permission, use Needle Rifles to incapacitate her."

"Are you kidding me!?" Nui asks shocked and is grabbed once again by Gamagoori, this time on the belly though. Mikisugi shakes his head in disbelief, while Iori and Nonon stay quiet.

"Find a way Iori, damn it, I don't care if we even have to sacrifice someone." Satsuki orders stressed.

"... but I..."

"FIND IT."

"... alright. I'll find something out."

...

Neo-REVOCS HQ

Ichiro is on the presidential chair, with his legs on the table. The hole Gamagoori caused via the Couturier hasn't been repaired hence why

a cold breeze enters the room. He simply watches the door that leads out of the room. After a few minutes, he pulls out a puppet he has sewn a while ago. A puppet of Ryuko, which he examines briefly. The man starts playing with her hair, then drags her arms carefully, her legs, her head briefly too. Watching Ryuko through Senketsu's eye doesn't help much, since she is only in her room now.

A few books lie on his table, all of them read several times already. A few philosophical books, some about psychology, and a few cooking books. Ichiro presses a button under the table that sends a Couturier into the room after two minutes.

"You've called me, master?"

"It's 5:29 AM and Matoi still is not here..." Ichiro mentions slightly impatient.

"How unfortunate."

"They know what happens if Matoi doesn't come over here. Get the Mankanshokus out of their cells and bring them to the Auditorium. If Matoi hasn't arrived in the next 24 hours or if one of them starts sleeping, kill them all."

"As you wish."

...

"Houka dude, eat something, you look like shit." Sanageyama mentions. Houka sits in front of him, with tired eyes and exhausted face. He moves the spoon in the Miso bowl slowly in circles, but doesn't really eat. Next to him sit Nonon and Tsumugu, although Tsumugu smokes a cigarette.

"Where's Ira exactly by the way?" Sanageyama asks.

"Guarding Ryuko." Nonon answers.

"Man, is that necessary?"

"Satsuki ordered him to do so."

"I'll be real: I mean, I get Satsuki's scared about Ryuko but like... have you guys heard how she's talking recently? She's getting unfriendly as hell too."

"Satsuki's a bit less kind than usual, yeah..." Nonon answers. Tsumugu makes a small smoke cloud and then reacts.

"We're wasting too much time on Matoi. We've been looking the entire night for something that wouldn't work at all most probably. Iori can't help Matoi, we know that. Think we should try to cut the Kamui or Harime apart and see if we can somehow help her by that, hell, anything that gives us time to concentrate on more important stuff." Tsumugu believes. He can hear someone entering the room. It's Mikisugi.

"Ahem. I know you are not a fan of Life Fibers, Tsumugu. I'm no fan either. But that's a risk I wouldn't dare either. Besides... that would be completely disrespectful towards her father Isshin."

"We should have burned that Kamui a long time ago. Because of it, this psychopath knows exactly what we were doing! And his Doppelgänger isn't to be trusted either. We're not coming further at all. The entire time we've been searching for a cure but didn't thought of seriously damaging Neo-REVOCS. And the suitcase Harime brought us? How should we spread all of this information so quickly? And who says Neo-REVOCS could be destroyed by that? They have an army out of Life Fibers, and every day they produce new "Couturiers!" These were humans. Living. Humans."

"The man plans something big, no doubt about it."

"Yes and I fear we can't stop it if we keep our focus on Matoi!"

"I understand your concern, Tsumugu, but you know Matoi is our biggest strength, and Harime isn't exactly weak either."

"No, Aikuro! We are our biggest strength. We humans. Our nudism. That is our biggest strength. Not hybrids that rely on their alien abilities. Yet all we do is rely on living clothes. And we have to do something against it, if we want to keep our name as "Nudist Beach". Tsumugu says and stands up annoyed, throwing the cigarette away.

"Calm down, Tsumugu, you are right, but we are not fighting against Ragyo Kiryuin and her COVERS, we fight someone who is much more dangerous than Ragyo could have ever been."

"All I'm saying is that we should be very careful towards our Life Fiber friends. Especially now." Tsumugu pleads and looks at Mikisugi. Mikisugi nods briefly.

"I know." the man with the blue hair answers. Tsumugu leaves the room, and Mikisugi sits down.

"Man, he's in a mood for sure." Nonon mentions.

"He often is recently since we know about the Kamui problem. You rarely notice that since Tsumugu usually keeps his calm, but he's losing his patience and I understand that."

"So uh... what do we do if we can't find something for Matoi?" Sanageyama asks.

"... I don't know."

"Oh man." he mumbles. Nonon looks at Houka again. He's just moving the spoon in the soup.

"Inu?"

"... yes?" he asks quiet.

"Please eat something for me."

"... okay."

...

"Ryuko?"

"... Satsuki?"

"I love you, little sister."

"I love you too, big sister." Ryuko smiles.

Satsuki smiles to that as well. Both sit in the living room of the Matoi Mansion, together on the sofa, watching a movie while the wind howls outside. The chimney on the right warms the room up. Both women wear their every day stuff - Satsuki wears a nice blue dress, and Ryuko her usual jacket and scarf.

"To think we only met each other because... dad had to die..."
Ryuko thinks, lowering the movie volume.

"I suppose it was fate."

"... yes... and what kind of fate..."

"We both are the last living members of our family."

"Mhm... how... how long did you knew father?"

"... just a few years. He was completely different than mother. He was full of ambitions, I believe, but... in the few memories of my childhood, he often played a role. The best one I can remember was when he once played guitar for me. I sat with him in the living room back then. A large, white room with modern interior and furniture. Mother sat outside in the pavillion back then, drinking a tea, and Soroi was cleaning up the room. It was... more or less... idyllic. I can weakly remember what we did back then."

"Dad played guitar?"

"He did, yes. Was good at it, I believe. He always played this one melody I still have in my mind. He even sang some words to it back then."

"How did the melody sound?"

"... hopeful."

"... and... what did you do when he was gone?"

"I haven't concentrated on anything else anymore. All I had in mind was to defeat mother. And at that point, everything was slower to me. I... never really had a real childhood, Ryuko, even if you could expect that from such a luxurious living woman, heh." Satsuki chuckles brief but loses her smile as swift as she got it.

"I get that. I quickly was alone. 'Schools I visited were trash. One brawl after another. Couldn't really call that a childhood either. Mako and Senketsu were the first people I really could call friends."

"I think that no one in our family really had a real childhood. I hope this never happens again." Satsuki says. Ryuko starts chuckling to that briefly.

"What, you thinking of becoming a mother yourself?" Ryuko grins. Satsuki blushes briefly.

"... I wouldn't be a good mother." Satsuki chuckles.

"Oh don't come up with that, you ain't gonna be that bad and if you do, it's gonna be up to Auntie Ryuko!"

"Heh. I... just fear the Life Fibers will come back at one point. What... about you?" Satsuki asks careful. Ryuko thinks briefly.

"I... don't know. I don't think so."

"... alright. I just want you to know that... I don't want anything to happen to you. Never again. You... shouldn't experience another..."

war. Just like me. Just like anyone on earth."

"Nothing is going to happen to me, Satsuki. You know that. Shit, if anything, I'm gonna be the one who's going to kick ass again."

"I know. And that scares me. You should just know you are the only thing I never want to lose. *sigh... I'm getting sentimental. Apologies. I just want you to know I'm caring for you, even if you might disagree with me sometimes."

"I know, Satsuki. It's okay. I... wouldn't get mad at you for it. I can be really stubborn sometimes. Guess that's a thing Senketsu really showed me."

"... yeah." Satsuki answers. Ryuko looks at Satsuki and notices her gaze. Behind all that strong facade you can see how worried she is, even though everything is okay again.

"Satsuki?"

"Yes?"

"That... melody. And dad. What did he sang to you?" Ryuko asks curious. Satsuki smiles.

" **Don't lose your way**... is what I can remember."

...

Iori sits in Ryuko's room. Life Fiber canisters stand next to him. The door to Ryuko's room is still guarded by Gamagoori. In the meantime, Satsuki stands in the control room, alone in the dark, waking up from her dream. Her pulse is high. She does not dare to visit Ryuko, and her body is completely cold. A few documents Nui brought from Masaru are still on the ground. She picks up one of those documents. On it, she can read what happened with the people from Mako's village. Most of them were processed.

"So... that happened to the people in that village... all of them... are Life Fibers now." she whispers quietly to herself.

"And what did I do? In the end, I messed up. What happened to me...?" she wonders. Several thousands of "resources" spent on producing Life Fibers. All of them... humans. The room light starts flickering, causing Satsuki to look up. There, she can see Ragyo sitting on a chair on the other side of the room, in the dark, where her face is only barely visible.

"You seem sad, my child. Would you like to talk?" Ragyo asks.

"... about what?... isn't the gaze onto me not enough satisfaction?"

"I have that satisfaction, Satsuki. It would be fair... to listen to my daughter once." Ragyo answers cold. Satsuki lets the document fall. It slowly hovers to the ground without making a noise.

"Ryuko dies. Iori has to do something against that. Something."

"And if he can't do that?" Ragyo asks. Satsuki hesitates. She forms her hand slowly into a fist.

"... then I will conquer all of Neo-REVOCS myself. Slaughter them... all of them... like pigs. The Samurai. The Ashigaru. The Couturiers. Yamamoto. And the Director. All of them. They will feel the wrath of Satsuki Kiryuin. None will survive."

Do you think it has to come that far? All this resolve that once resided inside you... is gone. Such a strong and proud personality, simply gone... you wish back the time where you could walk with a summer dress through a little town, not thinking about REVOCS, the world, or anything else. No. Just you, your dress, and your freshly baked baguette from the bakery which you share with your friends... and your sister Ryuko. Isn't it so?"

"... I deserve a dream like that."

"And oh my, how you really do. All the blood. All the tears. All the sweat. You've sacrificed so much to end me and my deeds, and now Ryuko does one single mistake, and the world is at stake again. But does it have to end like this? Does Ryuko Matoi have to die because of such a small mistake? Does she have to die, because you became soft... and weak?"

"What... do you suggest?"

"You should attack Neo-REVOCS with every man and woman that lives in this base. Take the cure with force. And then the world, like the true leader you are."

"It would be a death wish, mother. Attacking Neo-REVOCS would only cause the Director to destroy the cure."

"How true, how true. Hm... may it be that my suggestion was not as good as I hoped it would be? We should consider our options, daughter. Would you like to drink a tea? Just like back then in the pavillion with me, Hoomaru, and Nui? Tea calms you down." Ragyo asks careful. Satsuki hesitates. All of this is just another bait of Ragyo to get more and more control over her daughter.

And yet, Satsuki cannot resist. The idea... sounds too good.

"... this... is a suggestion I would consider." Satsuki answers and stands up slowly. Eventually, she leaves the station. Iori in the meantime takes another look at the Life Fibers he stored up next to him and writes down a few notes to make sure he knows all the needed steps for the operation. After all, the man is not a surgeon. He wouldn't even dare to perform a surgery if Ryuko wouldn't be a hybrid. Ryuko being half Life Fiber, half human is the only reason why he does this now.

...

Tick. Tack. Tick. Tack. Tick. Tack.

...

"I'm tired." Mataro mumbles sleepy.

"You need to stay awake, son!" Barazo says and shakes his son up. Mataro looks around. He, Mako, Barazo, Sukuyo and his dog Guts are in the brightly lighted up Auditorium of the Neo-REVOCS HQ now. Couturiers and Ashigaru accompany the family. Until Ichiro enters the room, walking on the podest next to them, with an entourage of red robe Couturiers. Ichiro looks down to the Mankanshoku family.

"Mom or dad shall come up to me now." Ichiro orders. Sukuyo and Barazo whisper something to each other, then, Barazo is brought up to the Director. Mako's father is slightly taller than Ichiro, yet Ichiro doesn't make any effort to look into Barazo's eyes.

"It's 6:30 PM, Mankanshoku, and Matoi hasn't been here yet which gives me the feeling she and Satsuki aren't that interested in your health. That gives me the template for a fun little mind game. Remove the clocks in the room!" Ichiro yells. The Ashigaru climb up the walls via ladders to remove all the clocks and deactivate anything that could give information about the time. Barazo's watch on his right arm is also removed by a Couturier.

"You will all proceed as usual. Stay awake, admire the beautiful Auditorium or talk with the Couturiers. If Matoi arrives before it's 6 AM, all of you will be free to leave the building, and my men will not search you any longer. However... if Matoi does not arrive until the clock hits six, I will come back with five fun ways on how to execute all of you. Imagine it like a little scale, the first execution will be the tamest one. I don't know. Decapitation. Or breaking the neck. Something that is quick, sweet, and comparably painless."

Barazo looks down onto Ichiro. Who does he think he is to talk to Barazo's family like this?

"The second one would be more cruel. Maybe someone could bleed out. It would be messy, but I'm luckily not the one who needs to clean everything up. And the last execution would be the most cruel one. Have you seen how we process humans? Well, one of you will find it out if Matoi doesn't come. And if it happens to be the stupid dog next to little Mako, we'll find a suitable end for him too."

"You are sick!" Mataro yells at Ichiro. Ichiro smiles briefly, then looks ice cold back onto Barazo's upper body... and then, after three more seconds, into Barazo's eyes. Barazo can see directly into Ichiro's mind. There can't be a heart. There is nothing. Just emptiness. No... a few Life Fibers moving around. That's all.

"Did you understood that, you fat fuck?" Ichiro asks grinning.

Barazo doesn't give an answer. Any answer would be inappropriate towards Ichiro.

"Bring him back down." Ichiro orders and lets the Couturiers pull down Barazo again.

"Ryuko will come here and once she see's you, she will destroy you!" Mataro yells once again. Ichiro nods ironically agreeing to Mataro's comment.

"I'm sure she will."

"Didn't you had ANYONE who got you onto the right path?! There's no reason to be like this!" Mako pleads, unable to understand Ichiro's deeds.

"My dearest Mako, my name is not Nui, my name is Ichiro, forgive the confusion." Ichiro grins and walks away.

"Hey! You don't need to be like a monster!" and suddenly, Mako is dragged by Ichiro with Life Fibers onto the podest, slamming the poor girl onto the ground until she lands in front of Ichiro's feet. Ichiro grabs her up.

"My dear Mako. Let me tell you a small story about a girl that has been tortured to hell and back to become a weapon for her mother. She was a young and, probably, kind little thing until humans started to imprison her, closing her into dark rooms, with nothing but one small white light. She got raped by her mother, laughed at by her henchmen, and shot in an alleyway to come back from the dead to finally be what she always should be. Her name was Nui Harime and she was a worthless little creature, so worthless she couldn't even kill the nose bleeding coconut head brat you are." Ichiro threatens and holds his arm up, forming it into a blade. Sukuyo stands up scared to help Mako, but the Couturiers drag her down. Ichiro laughs to that.

"NO! DON'T DO THIS!" Sukuyo screams scared.

"I on the other hand, am the product of what happens if you take said worthless little creature, remove all the "boohoo sad things" and emphasize on the strengths it had. That is me. There's nothing to pity about me because I love myself, honestly, I genuinely love the things the Life Fibers taught me because it shows me once again that in the end, humans lost their privilege to live because they couldn't keep up with evolution unlike we Life Fibers did. The only thing I admire on you is your optimism. We both are optimists after all. Aren't we? Do you really think I would kill you? Now, if you apologize to me, I will let you go back to your mother."

"... I'm sorry."

Ichiro lets Mako fall onto the ground. Mako runs back to her mother with tears in her eyes. The clocks have been removed now. A Couturier whispers something to Ichiro.

"This was fun, see you later this night!"

"Mako, are you okay, did he hurt you badly?" Sukuyo asks and hugs her daughter.

"I'm... I'm okay, I... I just... I just hope Ryuko comes soon..."

...

Tick. Tack. Tick. Tack. Tick. Tack

Nui lies in her bed, the clothes washed, and wearing them. She quietly counts the seconds inside her head, and every time a new second dawns, she tips her finger onto the bed. Outside, people talk. Guards stand in front of her room now and have some chit chat.

"Chosen by the Life Fibers. Destined to great. Chosen by the Entity. To fulfill their will. And to purge the weaklings. That is your purpose." the voice of the High Entity halls inside her.

"You serve me. You serve us. The Kiryuin family. From the moment you were born. All who origins from their blood is your master, and your will is eventually unfree whenever you are needed, for you are the perfect life form." she hears Ragyo talk inside her head.

"Don't show any mercy. Humans hate you. Be more cruel than anyone else. You are a deity in a world full of worthless creatures that serve as a mere stock for your species."

Her eyes light up briefly in white for a very short moment.

Nui finds herself back in the tailors hut inside the forest of Nagoya. As young woman, full of blood. She just killed Ragyo's last henchman. Eventually, Nui falls back and looks around. Blood is everywhere. On the wall, the interior, the stitching machine. And then there are the corpses. She stands up.

"They only played with me because they disliked me..." she realizes and leaves the hut.

A thunder rings out again. The rain becomes even stronger. Stronger than Nui had in her mind. As if the world would sink. As if the world started crying.

Nui walks back to her bowtie but she notices it's completely soaked and bloody. Because of that, she throws it away and walks back to her home. On her way home, she finds a large water puddle. She walks up to it and looks into it. It reflects her face, with all the blood, and a smile.

And so, she laughs.

Her laughing is sickening. It makes her ill. So ill that she needs to stop after twenty seconds because it hurts so much. Because it just pressures down the tears inside her. And then, she rams her fists onto the ground.

"THIS ISN'T ME! AHAHAHAHA!" she screams like a maniac and falls with her head into the puddle. Whimpering like the little kid she is.

"... I just want someone that loves me..."

Steps are audible.

The little girl turns around. With tears in her eyes that are covered by the rain.

It's Ryuko.

"Ry... uko?"

Just as Nui is about to hug Ryuko, the world falls apart, and Nui blinks her eyes.

A single tear rolled down her eye.

"Don't die now." Nui mumbles and stands up, turns on the lights of her room and enters the bathroom where a mirror reflects her face. She deeply looks into her eyes and notices the devils masks.

Nui closes her eyes for a moment, and as she opens them again... the devils masks are gone. Human eyes are visible. She breaths in

deeply. And then, she walks back into her room, removes the blanket and grabs out her rifle under it, knocking on the door, keeping the rifle hidden. The guards open the door.

"What do you need, Harime?" a guard asks and is dragged into the room by Nui. As the second guard is about to attack Nui, Nui pulls the second man into the room as well. Clones fall from the shelf and grow up, pulling out their Needle Blades to keep the both men on the ground.

"Don't kill them by any means, but if they try to flee, hurt them." Nui orders.

"Good luck, mistress." a clone says. Nui's clones that are left on the shelf climb into her vest pocket, readying their Needle Blades. She quickly locks the door and shrinks her weapon, then swiftly walking through the halls of the Nudist Beach base where she can see Satsuki and Tsumugu in the command center, with Satsuki drinking tea. Satsuki and Tsumugu didn't noticed her. With calm pulse and a clear mind she takes a good look at her surroundings. There aren't many guards at the moment, most of them are eating right now. Reaching the medbay, she finds two guards that immediately become suspicious about her.

"The hell are you doing here, Harime!?" a female guard asks. Nui pulls out Life Fibers from her fingers and ties both of them together without them having any chance to defend them and making them unable to speak. With that done, Nui walks around the corner where she see's Gamagoori entering Ryuko's room. Nui keeps her Fiber Rifle ready and sneaks to the door. She can hear Ryuko coughing blood.

"I'm starting now, Gamagoori." Iori says. Ryuko can't properly see anymore. Senketsu sits next to her, holding her hand with his sleeve.

"So what is your plan?" Gamagoori asks.

"I will give Ryuko a strong narcotic and then carefully open and enter her head. Since her brain is made out of Life Fibers, the chance of causing serious wounds and risks is lower, however, I am not a doctor and accidentally cutting or hurting parts like her frontal cortex will cause irreparable damages to her mind and therefore kill her. I'm already glad if I can see this corrupted Entity thread at all."

"Good. I will let Lady Satsuki know about this. How long will you need?"

"I assume an hour." Iori answers. Gamagoori nods and turns around, seeing Nui who aims at both of them.

"Let Ryuko alone, Shiro." Nui orders. Iori and Gamagoori both look to her.

"Nui, what are you doing?" he asks worried.

"Let. Ryuko. Alone."

"You have nerves to show yourself here, Harime!" Gamagoori reacts evil. Iori stays next to Ryuko, however, he holds his hands onto a table so that Nui can perfectly see them, while Gamagoori slowly approaches the psychopath.

"Nui, what... the hell... is going on?!" Ryuko asks shocked. Senketsu is just as shocked as Ryuko. Nui starts aiming at Gamagoori.

"How did you got out of your room?!"

"Two little naked humans will not stop me, but they are alive and I haven't hurt them." Nui answers with a cold gaze. Gamagoori bites his teeth together evil and watches Nui.

"You dare to leave your room without Lady Satsuki's permission!?"

"Shut up or you will catch a bullet."

You threaten me!?" Gamagoori yells and attacks Nui. Nui dodges and shoots at Gamagoori, hitting his right leg. The large man starts bleeding and falls to the ground, unable to move properly. Nui aims at his head, but she keeps her finger away from the trigger. She does not want to kill him... and hurting him wasn't part of the plan either.

"OH NO, Gamagoori!?" Iori yells scared. Gamagoori holds his wound.

"It's alright, just a scratch, grrr..." he growls annoyed.

"I'm not your enemy, Mr. Big Guy. I don't want to kill you, so stay on the ground." Nui orders with an ice cold gaze and then she turns to Iori.

"But Nui, you..."

"Shiro. You always tell me I should trust you. Now you need to trust me. Ryuko will die and you have no clue of what you are doing. Your plan will not work. Removing the thread will kill Ryuko."

"And if you and me..."

"I'm the Grand Couturier. Not the High Entity, Shiro." she explains worried and looks into Iori's eyes. Senketsu carefully unplugs Ryuko from the devices that analyze her body properties.

"Please don't make me shoot you too." Nui pleads with a cold voice. But Iori understands the coldness isn't coming because she doesn't care.

"Why are you doing all of this?"

"... I was born to serve." she answers and pushes Iori carefully away. Iori then walks near a wall towards Gamagoori. She knew exactly where to shoot at Gamagoori to only slightly wound him

without bringing him into serious danger as he quickly notices. Eventually, Nui helps Ryuko get up.

"I... need Senketsu..." she mumbles. Nui grabs Senketsu and helps her putting him on. Ryuko can barely move, hence why Nui holds her.

"... but why... Nui... you..."

"Shh, quiet now, sweetheart. I'll get you to Neo-REVOCS."

"Nu... Nui..." Ryuko mumbles. Senketsu looks at Nui with large eyes. Outside, people run around. The shot from Nui's weapon was well audible. Nui swiftly gives a handsign and helps Ryuko get to a wall next to the door while she pulls out the shrunken scissor blades from her pocket.

"Take the Doppelgängers in my pocket." Nui orders quietly to Ryuko. She carefully takes out a few of Nui's clones and lets them hang on Senketsu and her shoulders.

"Nui." Senketsu says.

"Don't worry. I'm not killing my own people." Nui answers and kicks open the door with the weapon in both her hands. Six Nudist Beach guards stand there, holding their weapons and aiming at Nui, but as they see Ryuko, they are quickly getting uncomfortable about what to do now. Ryuko slowly sneaks behinds Nui as she aims at the guards, performing a cold gaze only a used killer could do, and Nui is such an killer - but that gaze only serves the purpose of scaring the men and women off instead of emphasizing the idea of killing them.

"She wants to kidnap Matoi!"

"We gotta do something!"

"But we can't defeat her, she is too strong!" the Nudist Beach soldiers say. Iori leaves the room.

"Hey! I need your help!" Iori yells to the men and women.

"But..."

"Doesn't matter, get over here now, we got a wounded one!" Iori orders. The soldiers run to Iori, then, the tailor looks at Nui. Nui nods towards Iori briefly as a means of saying "Thank you", and as the guards enter the room, Iori nods back. Ryuko falls, Nui picks her up quickly.

"Take the clones on your shoulder, throw them on the ground, give them life, and they will serve you until their death." Nui explains to Ryuko and lets off her. Ryuko then grabs the clones and drops them on the ground. They quickly grow and help Ryuko walk.

"Let us help you, Ryuko-chan!"

"We will carry you like a baby if we have to!" another clone laughs happily. Nui walks forward and reaches the end of the medbay. As the door opens, Nonon and Sanageyama walk pass her and jump up.

"Woah, what are you doing!?" Nonon asks scared as Nui aims her weapon at her. Sanageyama draws his sword, Nui however reacts quick enough to hit him before he can do something.

"Come on, Ryuko!" Nui yells. Nonono and Sanageyama notice Ryuko now.

"The hell are you doing, dude!?" Sanageyama asks confused.

"I'm not going to let Ryuko die."

"She ain't gonna die, she..."

"Go on, Ryuko! I don't want to hurt you guys, so don't come into my way." Nui asks and follows Ryuko as Nonon and Sanageyama run into the command center to alert Satsuki.

"So... what... where... do we go?!" Ryuko asks.

"I got a car up on the island. I'll take the quickest route to the HQ."

"Nui, I..."

"We'll talk later! First we get to the car!" Nui orders and reaches the main halls with Ryuko. Via the dormitories is a shortcut that leads to the island surface, which is why they take this route even though Satsuki will most probably wait for them there. But that is a risk Nui and Ryuko have to take now, time is running out and the path to Neo-REVOCS HQ is long, and who knows what Ichiro does to Mako and the others in the meantime? Guards approach Ryuko as they reach the halls that lead to the dormitories, the canteen and the command center.

"Get away from me and Ryuko!" Nui yells evil and loads another round into her weapon. A "Kling" rings out.

"Where are you going, Harime!?" a man asks. Nui shoots at the ground before him while looking at him with a piercing gaze.

"The next one will hurt." Nui threatens. Followed up by that, the guards take a step back. They realize they can't keep up with Nui just with ordinary weapons, they need Needle Rifles for that. Again, Ryuko coughs blood and falls down once more, Nui and her clones pick her up again.

"Move, Ryuko!" Nui orders once more. Nui drops more clones that keep their back safe. It's not far until they reach the dormitories.

When the pair walks around the corner, Satsuki walks right into their faces, with Nonon and Sanageyama behind her.

Satsuki and Nui look into each other.

"Run." Nui orders to Ryuko as Satsuki draws her blade, attacking Nui and hitting her arm, causing Nui to bleed badly.

"Gwah... that hurts." she mumbles, as if Satsuki herself would have got to the few feelings she has left. Eventually, Nui kicks back Satsuki, keeps her weapon away however to not hurt her. Nui's clones attack Satsuki with their first and help Nui and Ryuko escape from her. Sanageyama rings out the alarm for the base.

"Grrr, I ain't going to shoot or hurt your, dear Satsuki, but right now you are more insane than I apparently am!"

"You whore." Satsuki mumbles evil and follows the two. As both escapees arrive in the dormitories, Nui catches Ryuko and runs with her to an elevator. The clones perform a wall, with one of them running at a nearby fire extinguisher to hold off Satsuki a bit longer. Satsuki does get stunned, but only very briefly, and then she runs through the smoke and destroys the wall of clones with two wave attacks channeled from the power of Junketsu inside Satsuki's sword. As Ryuko and Nui get into the elevator, Nui quickly presses the button to go up. The door closes, and Satsuki only barely catches it, pressuring her hands against the door.

"WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING, YOU BASTARD!?" Satsuki screams at Nui. Nui lays down her weapon.

"Only Neo-REVOCS will help Ryuko now, you dummy!"

"If you take my sister away, you will be dead the moment I see you!" Satsuki threatens. Nui grabs Satsuki's hair and drags her head towards her until both their noses almost touch each other. Ryuko loses her consciousness as she is too exhausted to continue.

"She is also my sister. Sister." Nui threatens and looks directly into Satsuki's eyes, full of frustration. Satsuki's is speechless by this sentence. Even more when she see's her human eyes.

"Sorry." Nui says and gives Satsuki a headnut, stunning Satsuki once again. She loses her posture and falls back, then, the elevator closes and goes up. Nui turns around again and see's Ryuko on the ground, blood leaves her mouth.

"No no no no..." she mumbles scared and holds Ryuko up.

"She's losing her power, Nui!" Senketsu says.

"Uh huh, I see that!" Nui answers and slaps Ryuko's face, waking her up again.

"You're not dead yet, Ryuko!"

"I... can barely... see... a thing."

"How far is it to the car?" Senketsu asks.

"Just around the corner!" Nui answers.

"Alright, good. We really need to hurry up, I can barely sense her blood anymore."

"I gotcha, friend, just keep her awake!" Nui begs. The door opens and the group finds themselves back in the cold snow of the island surface. Nui swiftly drags out Ryuko from the elevator and to the car. She can't even really walk anymore and needs a break, and hell, she probably doesn't even have enough blood anymore to let her legs properly work. Guards run to the elevator, Nui and Ryuko take cover behind a wall that leads to the garage as they walk forward, and quickly, they find a door that leads to Nui's Neo-REVOCS car. The psychopath opens the passengers seat door as fast as she can and helps Ryuko get in.

(AN: On Youtube, type in "Do You Believe in Ghosts." from "The Polar Express." Listen to it while reading. Trust me. Do it.)

"Get in, buckle up." Nui orders and closes the door again, then, she runs to the drivers seat door. There, she throws her rifle next to her

seat and as she is about to take a seat and close the door, she can hear how a weapon is unlocked.

"Nui." she can hear Mikisugi say. Nui turns around slowly.

Mikisugi stands there, five meters away from her, aiming perfectly on her head with a calm posture... and with a Needle Rifle that, if it hits her, will incapacitate her for the next hour.

In this very moment, Nui wishes she could show something else than her cold look. That, or her smile.

Disbelief spreads through her body.

"Don't do this. Please."

"Why are you doing this?"

"..."

"Why do you kidnap her? Why do you care for the others?"

"I... don't want to kidnap her. I want to help her. She's dying. Can't you see that?" Nui asks cold, unable to show emotions. She'd beg if she could.

"I... I know."

"Then let me go."

Mikisugi still aims at her and breathes in and out, holding his finger onto the trigger and slowly moving it. Just two more centimeters for a shot. Nui sees that.

"Please... let me do what you... "humans"... what call the "Right thing." I don't want to lose her."

The words hit Mikisugi. It's well visible in his face. Disappointment. Distrust. But somehow... hope as well. The widower swallows.

"... I... I had a girlfriend once. Her name was Kinue. I... I loved her." Mikisugi says, closes his mouth briefly and licks his lips while doing so, and tears seem to leave his eyes. Nui watches him.

"She... she died during an experiment... she believed that... that humans and clothing... Life Fibers... that there would be a connection between them. That... they could live together. So she put on a Kamui. And it... it tore her apart... like a monster."

"..."

"In her last words, she said that she still believes that humans and Life Fibers could... live together. That not all of them would be parasites. Some... some of them have feelings. Some of them... have a heart."

"..."

"Do you have one?" Mikisugi asks and inhales heavily. Nui can see how his tears fall down into the ground, shaping the snow he stands on.

"... I don't. Mama... never wanted me with one. It's... not my fault." she says, scared of what to say next.

"..."

"I didn't chose to be like this. It doesn't apologize what I did. I don't apologize now. What would it help?"

"..."

"You know... I think tw-two kinds of monsters exist: th-those... who were... r-raised to be monsters... and those... who genuinely are evil..."

"..."

"I'm trying my best."

I really do.

It's just... very hard... wh-when your own family hates you for... what you are." Nui says. A single tear leaves her eye which she quickly removes. People like her don't want to cry.

"But... m-monsters like me deserve it... right?" she stutters.

Snow flies through the area and lands onto her hair.

The wind howls.

And small fires all around her enlighten the night.

"... I..."

"I only have her and Satsuki. I'd die for them. Even if it scares me. I just want them to love me."

...

The man lowers his weapon. He throws it into the snow. Every single word was full of anxiety. Her face is cold. But her voice?... scared. Both hear how the gate that leads off the island closes.

He can't speak anymore. He just nods to Nui's last sentence with tears in his eyes.

Nui enters the car and closes the door. Then she looks once more at Mikisugi and turns on the engine. Doing a 90 degrees turn, she starts driving out of the garage, passing by the Nudist Beach guards that start shooting the car, hitting Nui's shoulder, but she doesn't care, she continues and manages to get pass the gate briefly before it closes...

"... maybe the monster died years ago, and not you."

...

Facing Darkness, With a Brave Heart 2-2

AN: This chapter is something else. This will be very hard to chew, probably harder than Hoomaru dying - it will be violent, and if you take a look at the story cover which I updated you will get an idea on what to expect. All I can promise is that this story has a good ending, no matter how heavy things look like and will look like later on. Now, have fun reading, and get something to snack while reading, this chapter is 11000 words long! After this chapter I'll make sure you guys get the next one as soon as possible! :D As always, a review is appreciated! :D

Alarmsounds ring out. Shots are fired. Yet nothing helps. Nui and Ryuko are already gone. The snow fall has gone stronger, and it looks like it won't get any better soon. The young woman coughs blood and falls back onto her seat while Senketsu looks around uncalm. Nui tries to stay focused while driving with high speed as her Kamui notices.

Hands are clapping, and a satisfied chuckle is hearable.

"Who would have thought that out of all the people it is YOU that brings my dear Matoi to Neo-REVOCS?" Ichiro asks himself grinning. Masaru waits at the wall next to the entrance door in the presidential office.

"What do we do with the Mankanshokus?" Masaru asks calm.

"Nothing. Let them struggle some more. Who knows how long it'll take Matoi to arrive here."

"As you wish." Masaru answers and leaves the presidential office. Ichiro grabs the cooking book on his desk.

"I wonder if she likes fish..."

...

"I can... barely see... a thing..."

"Keep her awake, Senketsu!" Nui orders. The dark streets of Japan are only lighten up by a few street lights and the cars that still drive on it around this time, and the snow fall makes it more difficult. Ryuko tries to look around, but except for the lights, everything is too blurred out. There just isn't enough blood anymore to keep her body functioning properly. The Entity Fiber sucks everything up like a sponge. She can even hear her heart beat. It's pumping weak and slow, just enough to keep her up. The car's temperatur is warm, maybe too warm. In the meantime, Senketsu takes a look at the built in GPS. It's about four to six hours to reach Tokyo from Ôsaka.

"We have to tell them we are coming." Senketsu says. Nui looks at Senketsu cold.

"They know already."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm impatient. So is he." Nui answers and looks back at the street.

Ryuko loses her consciousness.

Suddenly, she falls from the sky and watches how the world blurs and distorts out, then, it renders itself fully dark - sounds of fire, rain, and wind, and as she lands on the ground softly and gently despite the high speed, everything goes silent again. Once she stands up, she can see, other than the cold black room she is now, a pillar shining in a white light which she however cannot reach. She remembers Nui spoke about that room once - emptiness.

"Ryuko! Don't sleep now! Not now!" Senketsu yells and wakes Ryuko up again.

"Y... yeah I... just have to... ugh... my head.. need to... sleep..." and Ryuko loses her consciousness again.

...

...

...

"Ryuko!" she can hear Satsuki yell.

"RYUKO!"

"Satsuki!"

...

Again, the world around Ryuko changes. She lands in front of the old Honnouji-Academy, around the students, the Elite-Four, and above all, Satsuki Kiryuin, who stands with pride and resolve above everyone else, looking down to Ryuko with an uppish gaze. Time has stopped, but Ryuko can move. White Fibers seem to be in the sky. They move slowly, yet they are gigantic and massive, and somewhat thin as paper. Ryuko can't get rid of the feeling they are more than just simple Fibers - she never saw those. Not even when she destroyed Junketsu and almost died due to the blood loss.

As Ryuko tries to find a way up to the White Fibers...

"Ryuko!" she can hear weak.

The world disappears once more, Ryuko falls into a black hole, then into the white Light she saw, and there, she finds herself back in the real world, where Nui shakes Ryuko awake.

"Would you stop sleeping already, Ryuko, you ain't going to die, YOU HEARD ME!?" Nui yells at Ryuko. Ryuko seems to exhausted, so tired, so helpless, next to the murderer of her dad, and she just looks at Nui with an hopeless, empty gaze, that's how much of her power is gone. She can't even move her hand properly anymore.

"Wha... what happened..."

"You've been sleeping for four hours!" Senketsu replies "... and Nui is taking a shortcut to Neo-REVOCS! She's driving even through the fields and forests!"

"... M-Mako..."

"Nui, what do we do with Mako?" Senketsu asks worried.

"I don't know, you tell me." Nui answers without any sign of participation. In the end, she does not care for Mako. All that counts is Ryuko's health.

"You don't care for her?"

"Until Ryuko says otherwise." Nui answers. Ryuko tries to sit more properly.

"This... stupid... Dir-director... can hear us, can he?" the dying woman mumbles. Senketsu look at Ryuko.

"Hey... you... son of a... bitch. Bet'cha super... interested in what I wanna... talk about?"

Nui smiles briefly.

"But... heh... should have given that Fiber the... ability to watch and hear... what I do... you loser." Ryuko grins as blood leaves her mouth.

"Just... you wait..."

"Don't annoy him too much, mon chér." Nui mentions. Ryuko tries to stay awake as Nui navigates through a dark forest. The group has passed Ôsaka, Nagoya and Shizouka. Yet Ryuko falls back unconscious once more.

Ryuko lands again into a dark hall in which a few Life Fibers hover around, and around her are people that are or were close to her, or who had an significant impact to her life. Satsuki. Mikisugi. Nui.

Mako. Her father Isshin. Her mother Ragyo. But as Ryuko approaches them, they suddenly dissolve into White Fibers, and briefly after, Ryuko dissolves as well... but it doesn't feel like she did. In fact, it rather feels like she would leave trails of herself. Memories, feelings, thoughts, dreams, wishes... all those things that are in her head. As if one Ryuko became many, and out of the many Ryuko's became an nearly infinite amount, split into smaller and larger White Fibers that fill up the otherwise cold and dark room.

And then, she is drawn out of this dream and lands back inside the car with Senketsu and Nui, in the darkness of the night, and the moon shines, and the snow falls from the sky. Christmas is coming soon. Ryuko notices the streets she and her companions are. Neo-REVOCS signs hang around here and there. Tokyo changed due to Neo-REVOCS influence as more days pass... as if they would build a second Nagoya. Wherever Ryuko looks at, Ashigaru and Samurai patrol the city at the evening, and she notices the building Satsuki used to live in.

"We're almost there, Ryuko." Senketsu mentions. Ryuko nods slowly and sits properly.

"Your blood is cold." Senketsu notices.

"... what... a surprise..." she mumbles. She takes a look at the time. 2:17 AM midnight. Did Nui got interrupted on the route? Anyway, Ryuko tries to sit down, but falls together and lands with her head onto Nui's shoulder. Blood falls on Nui's left arm, but it's alright. This is Ryuko's blood. It doesn't mess her up at all.

"I... gotta stay... awake..."

"Gosh darn it." Nui mumbles and crosses streets when the lights are red, speeds up the car, and soon, they can see the red-white lights of the Neo-REVOCS HQ that appears unbelievably impressive and tall in the night.

"Nui..." Ryuko mourns.

"Hm?"

"Mako, you... have to... you..."

"What's with that brat?" Nui asks when she turns the car to the right.

"... gotta... protect her... bring her safe, somewhere..." Ryuko begs. Nui looks down to Ryuko whose head still lies on her shoulder.

"Please..."

Nui looks back to the street, hesitant to answer at first.

"Where?" she asks. She doesn't do it for Mako. She does it for Ryuko. Because it's her duty. She obeys the Kiryuins... and now the last living Matoi. And more.

"... wait..." Ryuko mumbles and grabs the GPS.

"You... gotta close... your eye, Senketsu..."

"Alright." he answers and closes his eye.

...

A few minutes later...

...

"Director!" Masaru calls and enters the dining hall. He can hear cooking sounds in the kitchen nearby and takes a look through the open hole in the wall. Ichiro stands there, cooking an impressive and tasty looking meal from the looks of it.

"Matoi and Harime arrived."

"Bring them to the Auditorium."

"I assume we'll give Harime the Mankanshokus?"

"I'd kill them... but Matoi would turn really annoying so we'll let them live. Once we got Matoi, she and these annoying brats shall leave immediately."

"Of course. I'll make sure it happens."

...

Spotlights look down at Nui and Ryuko. Ashigaru guard the walls of the large complex, yet no one approaches the two women. Nui and Ryuko take a look around.

"Ever been here?" Nui asks.

"... no."

"Oh you missed out a lot then! This was a beautiful place years ago! We had flowers in the reception which Mama every once in a while controlled! And the beautiful pieces of clothing I made - and not all of them were made of Life Fibers!... but look what this clown made out of this place..." Nui reacts slightly insulted.

"... when I'm done here you ain't gonna... recognize this building anymore..."

"Good. Don't get too cocky though. Now, Ryuko?" she asks. Ryuko takes a look at Nui right after she removes the bel. Nui starts whispering into her ear.

"Now listen carefully, love. I'll get your stupid friend and her weird family to that place and see that they are safe. Inside the building is that Yamamoto guy, you know, the one with the cute glasses. He'll help you escape. Don't question him, do what he says and don't play a hero like you usually do. You can have hundreds of scissor blades, you will not get out of there if my Doppelgänger catches you, and from the looks of it, they improved the general structure of the building, meaning you won't be able to simply smash a window and jump out like Satsuki and I did last time. Keep your head down. If

you get the cure, just get out of there and try to get a car or something. At this point I can't help you anymore." Nui explains quietly. Ryuko nods slowly.

"... alright."

"And one last thing. Don't annoy my Doppelgänger."

"... why... I know how... angry you can get... and that's not too concerning then..."

"No. No, my love, you know nothing." Nui answers in a rather concerning way and leaves the car. Then, she helps Ryuko get out of it as well and walks with her over the snowy plaza of the HQ. Stairs lead to the building. Carefully, both girls walk up the stairs. Couturiers watch them at the entrance.

Inside, the lights blur Ryuko's vision even more. So many lights hang around in the enormously large entrance hall alone. Ryuko never saw something like this before. And to think this is the place Satsuki visited every once in a while, with flowers and clothes and more decorations. Now it's sterile, cold, menacing.

"Can you walk on your own?" Nui asks. Ryuko nods slowly. Nui lets off of her and pulls out her weapon, aiming at the people around her. Briefly after, Masaru and a few Couturiers in red robes appear.

"Welcome to Neo-REVOCS, Ryuko Matoi, Nui Harime." Masaru greets both of them. Neither of them says a thing.

"The Director is in the presidential office. He ordered me to give the Mankanshokus to Harime. Follow me to the Auditorium." Masaru orders. The Couturiers walk next to both girls while Masaru leads the way to the Auditorium. Via the stairs behind the reception that leads into the higher floors of the building, they reach the Auditorium. The lights are weaker now - everything is still visible, just not as good as one might expect. A little bit brighter than the lights of a cinema during a movie. Ashigaru watch Ryuko and Nui.

"No one will attack you, Harime." Masaru says when he notices how Nui aims at the Ashigaru.

"Rather one more dead than one less." Nui mumbles quietly. When the group walks down the stairs that lead into the Auditorium, they can see Mako and her family.

"Mako..." Ryuko mumbles scared and walks faster. The Couturiers help Ryuko walk down. Nui quickly follows. Finally, both friends see each other, with Mako running towards Ryuko and hugging her.

"Ryuko! What happened to you!?"

"... eh... just a few... scratches... I'll survive that too." Ryuko smiles and coughs. The weak light makes it hard to see how pale Ryuko got already.

"I'm so sorry, Ryuko! When you feel better again, we will eat ICE CREAM!" Mako tries to cheer up Ryuko.

"Heh... yeah... that'd be... neat." and then, Mako notices Nui.

"Uh... Ryuko...?" Mako asks worried as she see's Nui. Nui watches Mako and her family cold hearted and with a distant, apathic look. Ryuko looks briefly to Nui, then back at Mako.

"Yeah... I know... you remember Nui..."

"I... I saw her once in the village but I wasn't sure if it's really her, but what... I thought she... she..."

"... Mako, Nui will... protect you... and the others."

"But she killed your dad! And she tried to destroy the world! Are you sure that..."

"Yeah... she tried... but fucked up... Mako I know she is... not exactly the nicest person but... she promised to protect you."

Mako swallows. Ryuko takes a look around. Guards are everywhere. The atmosphere is... terrifying, in a subtle way. Is this the heart of evil, or does it go on from this point on? Maybe.

"Ryuko... why would she help you, she..." Mako mumbles and then, Couturiers drag Mako and her family and pull them to Nui.

"Move it!" a Couturier yells.

"No, Ryuko!" Mako yells scared and tries to free herself.

"Don't hurt her!" Ryuko begs. She'd attack them, but not like this. Mako and the rest is thrown in front of Nui's pink shoes.

"Leave this building!" another Couturier orders. Nui watches said Couturier with a murderous look.

"Don't you dare watching me like this, scum." the Couturier yells. Masaru picks up Ryuko.

"We need to go. The Director waits. And you need the help." Masaru says.

"GO NOW!" a third Couturier yells angry.

"Move it, Mankanshokus." Nui orders. Nui, Mako and the other Mankanshokus walk up the stairs.

"Wait... Nui...?" Ryuko yells and falls down. Nui looks down to Ryuko.

"I... why... are you doing all of this...? I never... gave you a reason to be... like this." Ryuko asks desperate. Nui lowers her weapon, with her looking directly into Ryuko's eyes.

"I'm sorry I can't be a good little sister for you, big sister."

Ryuko's eyes largen up. Nui deeps in breathly. She even tries to pressure down the tears. The question goes far.

"... Nui..." Ryuko answers shocked. Nui bites her teeth together, almost crushes her weapon. It hurts.

"I... know you don't love me." Nui says and tries to walk... but then she turns around and more tears roll down.

"But... it sure as hell would be nice if you'd stop saying you'd kill me. That... really hurts me." she mumbles in pain and goes on.

"... wait. I... didn't... I..." Ryuko tries to say as Nui and the Mankanshokus leave the Auditorium.

"... I didn't knew you'd feel that way." Ryuko mumbles, just as she is dragged up by a few Couturiers.

"Move it, Mato!" a Couturier orders. Masaru and the Couturiers leave the Auditorium while Senketsu takes a good look at the building. He notices how disgusted the Couturiers are while they hold Ryuko, well visible by their body stance.

...

Nui, Mako and the family leave the building via the entrance hall. On the plaza, a few Couturiers stand at Nui's car and watch her. They took off their mask hence why she can see their Life Fiber Being forms, and the empty faces that are dominated by the Life Fibers. Nui looks at the Couturiers, removing the tears and clearing her throat. Barely anything is left of her happy nature - no cuteness either. There's just a cold hearted woman left.

"Get in." Nui orders to the Mankanshokus as the Couturiers walk towards Nui.

"The High Entity asks what kind of feeling it has to be to fight the will of the own race." a Couturier asks. Nui doesn't react. As she tries to get into the car, a Couturier keeps open the door, and another one gives her a yellow Life Fiber.

"Talk to the High Entity... once you have the chance to." he orders. Nui grabs the Fiber with force and without saying a thing. Mako and her family look worried to Nui. Now, they let her close the door. Nui starts up the car and drives away, with Mako's family sitting on the seats behind Nui, and Mako sitting next to the driver.

"... uhm... are you oka..."

"I don't need your kindness." Nui interrupts. Mako can hear her breathing. Ryuko's question really got to her. Mako sighs.

...

"How could she?!" Satsuki yells angry. A few tears rolled down her eyes. Sanageyama sits next to Satsuki, holding his blade on the ground, bored. Gamagoori stands in front of Satsuki, his leg is alright again and bandaged. Nonon doesn't know what to say, Houka seems tired.

"So uh... what do we do now?" Nonon asks.

"Attacking Neo-REVOCS is equally as intelligent as killing ourselves." Gamagoori answers.

"Yeah what Ira said. I mean shit, I'm down for a challenge but like... this' a bit tough. I mean, we don't even know how many goons this guy has in that fortress." Sanageyama thinks.

"... we should have killed this whore when we had the chance." Satsuki mumbles with a feeling of guilt now. Gamagoori shakes his head.

"Lady Satsuki, I have to disagree with you. We may have suffered a heavy blow on our side now, but we will not give up and if it is true what the "Director" of Neo-REVOCS said, then he will not kill your sister. We need to face the fact he will hurt her, but I have no doubt he will also need her for something. We'll get her back, but for the

moment, we have to focus on what we have right now and keep continuing."

"As... he said. Your sister's chances of survival are not... *sighs*... not too bad." Houka mentions calm.

"Yeah. Ryuko's a tough one, toughest girl I know and I thought I got my stuff. You kick her ass and she kicks your balls, and if you are a woman, she'll make sure you get balls she can kick then. And trust me, that hurts much more than getting your ass kicked." the Samurai grins cool.

"Wouldn't have said in that way but yeah, what he said." Nonon adds to that. Satsuki stands up.

"I need a break." and so, Satsuki leaves the hall.

"Guess we all should go sleep." Sanageyama notices.

...

The presidential office door opens. Ryuko is thrown into the room by a few Couturiers, Masaru walks to the wall next to the door and waits. As Ryuko looks up onto the desk, she can see Ichiro who's looking at Ryuko down, holding his hands together as he sits on the desk. He's wearing a noble white shirt with a pink vest.

"Welcome to Neo-REVOCS, Ryuko Matoi." he chuckles. Behind him, the windows are visible, and the snow falling. Ryuko slowly tries to stand up.

"You really look horrible, my dear. What happened?"

"Shut... the fuck up."

"Rather prefer to be direct I see." Ichiro answers. Masaru watches both carefully. The young woman notices the blue phiol with the cure for the Life Fiber Sickness... and possibly for the parasite in her head. Ryuko falls behind, keeps herself on the knees though.

"Well here I am... so what... are you going to do now?" she asks. Ichiro grabs the cure and plays with it between his fingers.

"I can't stress it enough. The human mind is strange yet interesting. It can save so many things, can vary, processes logical things... I wish all the Life Fibers would be able to do that. Sadly, only a few can, like me. On the other hand, this doesn't necessarily have to be a good thing." the man mentions and walks towards Ryuko.

"Without consciousness and a mind, you cannot be broken. Your robots for example... they don't have such a mind. They just work. And once they are physically broken, well, then you can throw them away and replace them. It's like with the Life Fibers. Those you cut are gone... strangely enough, they have memories. They just can't properly express feelings. Can't properly think. Only a few of us can. That is a curse, you know?"

"... and why?"

"Because we then know we will die at some point. Take your dear Kamui. Senketsu lives, he has his own mind, he can speak and think for himself, he even feels pain. But he knows that at one point, he will die. Maybe in a few years. Maybe next week. But he will die. A robot doesn't think that. A normal Life Fiber does not think that. No, they simply exist." Ichiro answers and stands in front of Ryuko, kneeling down to her. He grabs her red hair.

"If there is one thing I can admire about humans, then it's their mind, and yet, it makes them weak. It's so simple to break it. Poor Satsuki. Must be crying right now." Ichiro mentions and finds the root of the red hair. One of his fingers forms into a needle with which he then makes a small, but harmless little hole into Ryuko's head. Then, he opens the phial and looks down to Ryuko. Both look into each other's eyes.

"You are different though. You are a hybrid. You have the mind of a human, and at the same time, the memories of a Life Fiber. You can see everything we can see. That is a gift."

"But wouldn't it make you a hybrid too?" Senketsu asks.

"Keep in mind, my friend, she has human properties. I don't. That is the only thing that does not make her a pure Life Fiber." Ichiro answers and empties the phiol into Ryukos head. She bites her teeth together. It's slightly painful. As the phiol is empty, he stands up, walks a few steps back and puts it onto the desk again.

"Et voilà." he grins. Ryukos muscle tense up, she's getting dizzy, her eyes close, and Senketsu looks around shocked. Thousands of things happen in Ryukos head - voices, images, things she never experienced herself, and then, after ten seconds, she falls onto the ground.

"Seeing you like this was enjoyable but at one point it honestly got strange. After all I'm mistreating the only person that is able to see every memory of their ancestors, their friends, and all those who came in contact with one of us." Ichiro continues. Ryuko notices how her heart slowly starts pumping stronger again, and her skin color looks more healthier again. Her sight is improving, her organs work better again... as if nothing happened at all.

"Wha... what happened?" Ryuko mumbles surprised and looks at the phiol. Only a few drops are left.

"Feels much better now, does it?"

"... so what now?"

"Now... do you happen to be hungry?" Ichiro smiles. Ryuko pinches her eyes. Senketsu looks surprised.

"Are you fucking serious?!"

"Yup. I'm "fucking serious." he grins and leaves the room. The Couturiers grab Ryuko and help her walk with Ichiro. Masaru grabs the phiol and follows them. Ryuko notices she lost her scissor blades, yet she decides to keep a low profile.

In the dining hall, the Couturiers wait outside. No one is allowed to enter it. Masaru waits at the door. Young Matoi in the meantime takes a look around, noticing how she feels much better all of a sudden.

"Is this really necessary?"

"Well of course! After all, you are our guest! Besides, I'm sure you are hungry." Ichiro answers curious.

"As if I'm going to eat here."

"Ryuko, we may wanna hear him out first and see what he says. I don't trust him either but so far he didn't do anything bad." Senketsu whispers to Ryuko. The entire scene appears strange and uncomfortable for Ryuko, and after some hesitation, Ryuko decides to sit down. Senketsu takes a look around.

"They even have a dining hall..." he mentions.

"... I'd burn everything down here."

"I'm glad if we can get out here." Senketsu answers. Ichiro briefly after returns with a huge plate, and a tasty odor leaves the kitchen. The plate lands in front of Ryuko who simply looks at it neutral. The plate is covered, but as Ryuko finds out what is below the cover, she makes, just like Senketsu, an amazed face.

Below is an exceptionally well cooked fish with expensive spices. Croquettes and rice are there as well, and even a salad... if this wouldn't be Neo-REVOCS, then Ryuko would try it out instantly. Ichiro sits down a few chairs next to Ryuko and watches her, while she just looks at him in distrust.

"Uh... okay?"

"Based on your former face expression you seem to be interested in the meal? Try it. After all, you haven't eaten anything for more than

24 hours. And I don't want you to starve."

"And what if I don't?"

"That's up to you." Ichiro smiles. Ryuko sighs.

"Besides, I put great effort into this meal. While you are eating I'd tell you what you are doing here."

"... Senketsu?"

"In that matter he is right. You haven't eaten much recently." he answers. Ryuko nods slowly and hesitantly grabs the fork, piercing it into the fish. It looks excellent. Masaru feels uncomfortable as he watches them. In the end, Ryuko decides to try a bite, and as it could have been expected, the fish tastes very good.

"Beautiful! You don't have to say anything! You must like it, it can't be different! I should become a cook sometime!" the Director grins happily.

"I guess." she answers and eats slowly but very patiently.

"Phew, now that we got you to eat and feeling well again, let me talk a bit about what will expect you next. Don't feel like a prisoner here, please, all I want is..."

"Lemme guess. Mind control? You wanna sew a stupid Kamui onto my skin? Or should I destroy a base?" Ryuko asks sassy. Ichiro looks surprised.

"Have I allowed you to talk?"

"I'm sorry." Ryuko answers sarcastically.

"No, Matoi, listen up." Ichiro orders and walks next to Ryuko, leaning his arms onto the table.

"Let me be honest with you. If everything would go the way I want it, I would have killed you long ago. I find you, your sister and my Doppelgänger disgusting, but out of you three, you really are the worst. Sadly I'm not in charge, but the High Entity which I assume you've heard about already?"

"Mhm."

"Cool! Cause the High Entity wants to speak with you! And if the High Entity wants to speak with you, then... well, then you really did some huuuuuuuuuge mistakes! Only very few are allowed to visit her. As long as it hasn't arrived here, you will stay in this building in the highest floors. You will be controlled and watched, and Masaru will make sure you aren't doing anything stupid. If the High Entity decides to let you live, I will let you live as well."

"What, you expecting some kind of visit from your boss?"

"She'll be here soon, yes. All the Life Fibers we've produced thanks to the volunteering humans that were stupid enough to buy our clothes landed in Honnouji-Academy, and once the Entity is here, it will judge you and your two companions. And then, the human world will experience major changes."

"So what? You guys trying to conquer the world?"

"Nope, it's way different! Terraforming, but I can't spoil too much! Haha!"

"Terraforming?!"

"There aren't many of us anymore... which is the reason why I find you so disgusting. You've killed so many of us. No one knows how many died. But everyone will be avenged."

"Sorry, bitch." Ryuko answers. Ichiro grins briefly, then suddenly slams away the food and grabs her neck, looking directly into

Ryuko's eyes. Ryuko notices his devil's eyes, yet his eyes are less playful and joking than Nui's... no, they spread pure terror.

"Kinda funny you say that, Ryuko Matoi! I'm trying... my very best... to be polite and friendly towards you, the High Entity knows that, dear Masaru at the wall knows that, dear Nui knows that, every worthless creature in all of fucking Neo-REVOCS knows that so you better keep your dirty mouth shut unless you want me to play a game with you you once played with my Doppelgänger! There are many ways to properly punish someone but I got one that will remind you to think twice before you perform an action."

"Go fuck yourself."

"My Doppelgänger isn't here and I'm not interested." Ichiro answers and drops Ryuko onto the chair again. He looks at Ryuko with an disgusted gaze. Then, he grabs Senketsu's eye.

"Ah!" he yells painful.

"Hey what the fuck!?" she reacts scared. Ichiro rips out a yellow Fiber out of him and destroys it.

"Without this Fiber, I cannot see or hear what your traitorous friend sees or hear! Take it as a sign of the last rest of support I have for you. I hate you. So much. Yet I expect for your own sake you aren't doing anything stupid. But if you do, oh my, Ryuko, fun will have an entirely new meaning and..."

"Alright!" Ryuko answers. Ichiro watches her and changes the angle of his head briefly.

"Alright. I get it." she continues. Ichiro nods.

"Masaru will show you your room later. If you have any human wishes, let him know. I'm in the office. Be nice to him." Ichiro smiles, as if nothing happened, and then, he pets Ryuko's hair briefly and

walks away. Ryuko takes a breath as Ichiro leaves the hall, and then, Masaru approaches her.

"You alright, Matoi?"

"Yeah, I'm good. Clown's just joking around." and Masaru shakes his head to that.

"No. No, he doesn't, Matoi. You should be very careful. This man really hates you."

"You happen to have any idea how Ragyo was like?"

"I do. Miss Kiryuin was nothing compared to him."

"Okay."

"Now listen well, Matoi."

"Mhm." Ryuko mumbles. Masaru pulls out a few notes, as well as the scissor blades and the phiol with the last rest of the cure.

"Since the Director can't hear us anymore... look at this."

Ryuko takes a look at the notes. Several different sketches are visible that present some kind of escape plan, with additional Plan B's if unexpected trouble comes up. Masaru really means it serious when he said he wants to help Ryuko from the looks of it.

"We've got several control rooms in the lower floors of the facility - they manage the power support of all my Ashigaru in the entire country as well as the building itself. I've been working on this since for a little while now, so I need to keep a low profile, my work isn't done yet. In regards to you: I'll deactivate the Ashigaru's combat abilities for the next 30 minutes which means you can walk pass them without them detecting you as intruder. On the notes are a few plans on how you can escape from here. Ventilation shafts, elevators, shortcuts, overpasses... choose whatever you feel comfortable with and what works best in the floors. This night we

have a lot of Couturiers walking around, so try to plan something out and stay quiet. The Director obviously knows you want to escape but he can't harm you as long as he doesn't get a reason for it. If the Couturiers find and raise the alarm, I can't help you. Cameras are deactivated as well."

"Cool, alright. But uh, what IF they raise the alarm?"

"... in case they do, run. Doesn't matter how many or who wants to fight you, run and don't look back, because if they catch you, the Director will make you regret it. This man really hates you. If he really challenges you to a fight, try to escape once the chance appears."

"Aight, gotcha." Ryuko answers and takes a closer look at the notes while Masaru turns his head to the door. He then stands up.

"Mind if I ask why you do all of this?" Ryuko asks. Masaru nods.

"I once came to REVOCS because I wanted to see equality in this world. Poor and rich should be allowed to wear the same clothes. No one would look down or up to each other. Sure, it would make everyone less individual, but as you know, clothes... can define people. I think your Kamui, based from what I heard, changed you as well."

"... yeah, Senketsu did."

"Yes. And I hoped Life Fiber clothes would be able to make everyone feel better but I suppose I was wrong. When Miss Kiryuin sent COVERS onto the world, I went into the underground of Tokyo. I never wanted to be part of this. When she died, I came back and built a new organisation with those who were left by REVOCS, and at first, we were rather peaceful. Your sister always was a thorn in my eye as I didn't agreed with her principles. I think Life Fibers can be something good when done right. Then, more and more extremists came and caused terror and violence onto Japan, and soon, I was no leader of a demonstrative group anymore, but an

illusion of one for something people righteously can call a terror organisation." he answers. Ryuko lays down the notes.

"When I met the Director, I went with him believing the world could change and this time for the better. But... I was wrong once again, and honestly? I feel like an complete idiot. A naive idiot that wanted to find more equality in the world. Think what you want of that, Matoi. But this is why I'm doing all of this. People died because of him and more will die if we don't do anything. I don't want to be part of this anymore. Now do me a favor, Matoi, and get out of here as quick and as quiet as you can. I can't help you if he gets you. I have to go now." Masaru says and approaches the exit.

"Alright. Hey."

"Yes?"

"I'll make sure this guy pays for what he did."

"Of course you will. When the time is right." he answers and leaves the dining hall. Ryuko is now alone in the room with Senketsu. Swiftly taking the Scissor Blades and the phiol into a pocket on Senketsu, she walks to the windows which seem to be well protected and stable though, and jumping out will surely be noticed.

"Aight. Let's see what we got." Ryuko mumbles and enters the kitchen, since Couturiers are probably waiting at the door. Looks like there is a second door in the kitchen that leads into another room. Ryuko opens the door and finds a hallway that apparently leads into other rooms. As she walks into the hallway, she notices how quiet it is here. All she can hear are her footsteps.

"Seems like via those rest rooms we can get to an elevator." Ryuko mentions as she takes a look at the notes. "... and then to the Fiber factories... and via some shafts and ladders to the Auditorium, and that has an connection to the garage. Alright..." she whispers.

"And only if everything works as planned." Senketsu mentions.

"Yeah. Let's hope it does." Ryuko answers and continues. Around a corner, she finds a few Ashigaru that look at her, but as Masaru said, they don't raise any alarms or interact with her. Ryuko even waves her hand but the Ashigaru's don't make any movement. Touching it doesn't cause an action either. It's a simple robot with some Life Fibers inside.

"Strange." Senketsu comments. Ryuko opens the door the Ashigaru guard, and soon, she finds a rest room. Since it's late, no one is here anymore. Nothing special is visible here. The next door leads to a hallway that has an elevator, and it looks like it's the one Ryuko is looking for. However, just as she wants to call it, lights on it go on. Someone seems to be in the elevator. Swiftly hiding behind a cover, she notices how a Couturier leaves the elevator. Careful, she sneaks behind him and enters the elevator, using it as the Couturier leaves the hallway. A quiet but light tone rings out, then, the elevator goes down. Lights flicker as the elevator goes down. Ryuko prepares her Scissor Blades in case Ichiro's goons are waiting behind the doors. Her cautiousness was not necessary however, as she finds herself back in an empty, dark hallway, with the lights off. Ryuko is below earth now, in the lower floors of the facility. According to the notes, Masaru suggested this way as it has an secret exit to the Auditorium and the lower city of Tokyo.

Ryuko walks through the dark halls that lead to the Fiber Factories. There seems to be a door in front of her, and opening it reveals stairs that lead up into another room with red shining lights.

"It's ice cold here." Ryuko comments.

"Mhm. Something tells me this is an area no one except these Couturiers should visit." Senketsu thinks.

"From the looks of it, yeah." Ryuko answers and shrugs, then she walks up. A large podest is visible as she reaches the end of the stairs, and on the left and right are capsules and sewing machines, three meters below the podest, connected with ladders everywhere. Capsules that produce Life Fibers by processing humans. The gaze

shocks Ryuko and Senketsu, yet there isn't much time to look around as Couturiers patrol the area. They seem to have not detected Ryuko however who decides to jump down near one of the capsules, and then she notices a bloody hand print on its window.

"... what the hell." Ryuko notices.

"Do they put humans into these cells?!"

"Sick bastard. Is that how he produces Life Fibers?" she wonders and notices a guide on the capsule which she takes a closer look to. The red light of the Life Fibers inside the capsules and the few red room lights help her read better. Senketsu reads out.

"Subjects have to be free of clothes of any kind and inserted into the processing capsule. Closing the capsule with the content will enable a button that can start the process. During the process, the Entity Fibers will insert into the host and slowly... corrupt him from the inside, eventually... transforming their biological mass from flesh into Life Fibers. The host's blood is contained in cells that can be used to feed undeveloped Life Fibers or can be sacrificed to the High Entity in order to restore its power..." Senketsu quietly reads. Ryuko notices how the window reflects her face.

"We gotta destroy this building, Senketsu." Ryuko says.

"Yes. Once we are out of here. Alone we will not be able to do much. And the Blade's decapitation mode won't be enough, I fear."

"I... once extended the blade to put down a giant fortress like thingy built by Hoomaru, that was... after you were gone though. I don't think I can do this again. Otherwise I would."

"Don't worry about it. We need to move." Senketsu says. Ryuko nods and turns around. Behind her, she notices an open wall marked by Masaru which leads under the podest. With a bit of effort she removes the small wall and crouches into it. Under the podest, she

puts the wall part back onto it's place and crawls forward. Steam and warmth is what she can feel under the podest, and pipes with small windows you can look into - blood and Life Fibers flow through them.

"... god damn it."

"One could wonder what your mother did back then."

"Not even she did shit this cruel." Ryuko mentions and continues crawling. Steps are audible above her. She can see the Couturiers walking around, and then, a door opens, with additional Couturiers, and a man with a pink coat - that has to be Ichiro. Ryuko listens up and looks through small little holes. Ichiro is speaking to a few Couturiers in a red robe.

"Matoi has arrived. Make sure the Life Fibers are finished soon."

"We will need two more days, master."

"I am aware. Finish them. The High Entity will arrive soon - in about a week, around "Christmas" time. Heard humans gift each other something."

"They will surely like our gifts to the world."

"Mhm." Ichiro mumbles satisfied. Ryuko crawls once more and ignores Ichiro. After all, she only wants to get out of here. At the end of the podest is a corner to the right that leads behind the walls of the large Fiber Factories is a ladder. Climbing up the ladder leads onto an overpass above other Fiber Factories. There, Ryuko can properly see how large the entire underground facility is... and it's horrifying.

"My god." she mumbles.

"I..." Senketsu reacts, speechless. Ryuko tries to focus and walks forward. Leaving the second Fiber Factory, she reaches a maintenance shaft which she climbs up, and there, a small room can

be found. Modern equipment for the power management is visible here, and a door. Carefully, Ryuko opens it... and finds an dark hallway that seems to be connected with the Auditorium!

"Think we got it." Ryuko mumbles quiet.

"We do. Let's go!" Senketsu says. Ryuko leaves the maintenance Room. Steps echo through the halls - there must be Couturiers around here. Ryuko decides to take the path via the Auditorium and then to the garages, as suggested by Masaru. Inside the Auditorium, Couturiers keep their guard up.

"Damn. How many are there?" she wonders.

"I'm counting... at least twelve."

"... hmm..." she grumbles and continues by sneaking behind seats on the highest floor of the theatre like large room. Suddenly, Ichiro and Masaru appear. The Couturiers concentrate on them. This gives Ryuko a better chance of getting through the room.

"Master?"

"Double the guards and increase the patrols. The Couturiers at the dining hall told me Matoi is not there anymore."

"As you wish."

"Ah crap." Ryuko mumbles. Ichiro looks around. His eyes shine red as he looks into the darkness. Ryuko does not dare to make a single move. He seems to not notice her when she looks into her direction.

"And close every opportunity to leave the facility as well." Ichiro orders.

"Very well."

"Masaru, I wanted to talk with you since our time is slowly but steady coming to an end." Ichiro smiles and leaves the Auditorium with him.

Ryuko hides and continues crouching through the room. Reaching an exit, she quickly, but carefully walks through and leaves the Auditorium. A stair house leads into the garages. Quickly, she slides down the stairs and then opens the door down there. Cars are everywhere, and Ashigaru that however do not raise the alarm. As she walks around, she makes an relieved look when she finally finds Masaru's car he prepared for her. An unnoticable civilian car of Neo-REVOCS. Ryuko opens the door and enters it, then she turns on the engine and starts driving calmly.

"Phew... alright." Ryuko breathes in and out. Senketsu takes a look around. Driving up the parking lot, she arrives on the plaza and the outer facility of the large Neo-REVOCS complex. The gates are closing slowly however, leaving her not much of a chance getting out of the building without causing trouble.

"Well shit." she mumbles.

"You think we can climb up the walls?"

"Probably. But I guess they'd see us before I can get behind a cover."

"So what do we do now?"

"Not sure. Could drive around and see if there is a little gap or something." Ryuko mentions.

"Alright." Senketsu answers and looks around.

...

Ichiro and Masaru enter a balcony above the entrance of the facility where they have a good lookout to the main entrance. Masaru seems uncomfortable.

"Now, Masaru, since we've come a long way, I'd like to talk with you about the High Entity which I mentioned a few times already."

"You did, yes."

"You seem uncalm."

"It's pretty cold here, that's all."

"Oh, my bad. Forgot you can't take the cold without your coat."

"Can we go in?"

"No, since we are already here... and besides, I still have some work to finish here."

"... alright."

"Masaru, you've been working quite hard for me and I admire your loyalty. You really work even if I have to rely on more cruel methods, honestly: I thought you'd be a coward, buuuuuut I guess I was wrong!" Ichiro grins.

"Heh... uhm..."

"And that is why I want to offer you something!" Ichiro smiles.

"An offer?"

"Indeed. When the High Entity is here, this entire planet will get into... slight problems, at least for it's current inhabitants, but you, my friend, I could get you out of this predicament. I appreciate those who work well - if we don't think of that one little problem with Matoi back at that REVOCS base - and someone like you could be useful for us Life Fibers, hence why I would like to offer you to join us."

"Join... the Life Fibers?"

"Yes! You'll become one of us. You won't have to be afraid of dying anymore. You won't even have to be afraid of starving anymore because all you need to survive is blood, and you got that in your

body, so the only thing you need to take care of is that you don't bleed out!" Ichiro grins.

"I see." Masaru answers and notices his car which Ryuko is driving. Ichiro notices how Masaru looks at his car, causing Ichiro to look at it as well.

"Isn't this your vehicle?" Ichiro asks with an confused smile.

"Uh... I uhm..."

"Do you have an chauffeur all of a sudden?" Ichiro continues curiously. Apparently, he isn't even acting, he really seems to have no clue what is going on.

"Not that I know about. Must be an Ashigaru that has an malfunction."

"Interesting. Well, robots, I guess they have problems as well, right, my dear? You should fix that." Ichiro mentions. But as the gate in front of Ryuko closes, the car drives back.

"Indeed they do." Masaru answers as he notices Ryuko's strange way of driving.

"Your Ashigaru really must have a strange malfunction."

"I guess we are just very lucky seeing all of this today." Masaru grins. Ryuko continues driving and dims the windows so that no one can see who's driving. Ichiro leans his head forward as he notices that.

"Strange... they dim the windows?"

"Malfunctions! Who doesn't love them, Director! That reminds me, we had..."

"Quiet. I don't like this." Ichiro answers and jumps down the balcony. Senketsu notices Ichiro slowly approaching them.

"Ryyyuuukooo, you may want to speed up things."

"Why, what's up?!"

"He's coming." Senketsu says. Ryuko looks to the window. Ichiro approaches them with a confused look. Ryuko turns her head left and right to look for another exit but can't find any without destroying the gate.

"I guess we gotta make trouble." Ryuko mentions.

"Are you sure?"

"I don't see any other way out of here!"

"Damn it. Okay." Senketsu answers. Ryuko turns the car carefully. Then, she can hear someone knocking on the window. It's Ichiro.

"Would the dear driver of this car lower the window so I can talk with him from eye to eye?!" Ichiro grins. He probably knows now who's inside it. Why else would he still care?

"Just drive!" Senketsu says. Ryuko nods. Just as Ichiro wants to open the car, Ryuko speeds up and slams, thanks to the high speed, Ichiro in the middle of the snow, covering him with it. He looks hilarious.

"Knew it." Ichiro reacts annoyed and watches Ryuko drive away. Ichiro turns into a fluid mass of Life Fibers and follows her.

"Oh shit. Matoi..." Masaru mumbles worried. Ryuko drives faster. Since there aren't many cars left, Ryuko is able to drive with high speed. By leaving the industrial area of Tokyo she enters the inner city where people are partying as usual. Ryuko decides to drive to the bars and restaurants of Tokyo as there are much more people - and therefore a good spot to hide. Swiftly walking down a club, she hides behind a wall and waits. The loud music and the people makes it impossible to listen, then again, hearing is not important anymore.

All that counts is visibility, and Ryuko luckily seems to be well hidden. However, she can spot Ichiro looking around. He's well visible thanks to his coat and him being the only one with a cute bowtie on his head. Ichiro pushes away the guests who seem to be unhappy with their new party member, and just as someone wants to attack the Director, he simply dodges. The man hits another partying person which hits back, then, that guy is pushed down, another one falls to the ground, and more and more people seem to be offended and start a fight.

"Ah crap." Ryuko mumbles and is then spotted by Ichiro who smiles as he see's her. Ryuko runs behind the bar and then draws her Scissor Blades, enhancing them.

"Come on and get me, you bitch!" Ryuko yells at Ichiro, ready for a battle if she has to fight, that is. Entering the kitchen, the cooks are at first confused, but as bottles fly into the room, they stay panicking and eventually run away. Ryuko and Senketsu stand on the other side of a table, Ichiro has to walk around it to get them.

"Was the meal really that bad?" Ichiro asks insulted.

"The fish was quite fine but I didn't liked the dude who made it!"

"Oh too bad, I'll make sure to spice it up next time!" Ichiro answers.

"I like a good steak more, try it!" Ryuko yells and grabs a steak which she throws into Ichiro's face. This stuns him briefly, and she uses the chance to escape.

"Ew, disgusting. Who the hell eats this!?" Ichiro reacts annoyed and throws the steak away. Senketsu's wearer is able to take a backdoor that leads out of the club and back into the city. Without any real clue on what to do, she runs through the city and pushes people away, but Ichiro closely follows her. Ryuko slams open a large door that leads into some kind of large aquarium. Examining the area, she realizes this is the main hall, yet the various cells full of water around her make up for a bad cover. Blue light shimmers through the cells

however and helps Ryuko see things. Eventually, Ichiro appears behind the front door and throws Life Fibers that act as a barricade. Ryuko turns around to face him.

"Hasn't even been one hour and you are already bored?" Ichiro asks.

"As if I'll spent the rest of my life in a fucking office!"

"But haven't you done that before the last years?" he asks. Ryuko's eyes grow.

"How the hell do you know that..."

"... you've been working for this Hokkaido company? I've seen your memories. They're part of us. Every Life Fiber has access to them. And everyone will see what we do here."

"The fuck you talking about!?"

"I'm talking about the past that reaches you eventually, my dear, and you cannot escape from it anymore. No, it stands in front of you, and frankly, I am glad you decided to escape because now I am allowed to hurt you... really... really... bad." Ichiro threatens and materializes his scythe from the air. Ryuko activates Senketsu Azami. Both opponents stand about five meters away.

"Shame I can't kill ya, but at least I can kick your ass so hard you gonna wish you'd never be able to regenerate!"

"I'm sure I will. Ever wondered how Satsuki is doing? She must be really sad right now." Ichiro grins. Ryuko bites her teeth together.

"Satsuki is the toughest bitch I know!"

"Bet she's crying because her little sister ran away! Wonder if she can forgive you."

"Grrr..."

"Ryuko, he just wants to provoke you, if he..."

"No, Senketsu. Who the fuck do you think you are?!" Ryuko yells.

"You really are easy to provoke, I love it." Ichiro smiles and attacks Ryuko with the scythe. Ryuko dodges and continues with both Scissor Blades, but here as well, Ichiro dodges. With Life Fibers, Ichiro grabs Ryuko and slams her against a wall. She does slam at it, however, she is able to land rather safe and avoids being hit by the scythe. As Ichiro misses, Ryuko uses the opportunity to hit Ichiro's legs, to which he only reacts with an tired laugh.

"Mhmhmh, is that really it? Not even Senketsu Kisaragi could scratch me!"

"Must feel really bad if you ain't allowed to kill me because this High ass Entity bitch forbids it, huh?!" Ryuko grins and attacks Ichiro again, hitting his arm and slamming him next to a statue in the middle of the room.

"Spitting loud words but you're bleeding just like anyone else!" Ryuko continues. Neo-REVOCS' Director attacks once more, but he does not react to Ryuko's provokes.

"Ryuko, we have to go once we get the chance! Try to stun him!" Senketsu mentions.

"Yeah alright!" Ryuko answers and avoids another attack, allowing her to slam her fist into his face. With that, she breaks his nose. Ichiro attacks Ryuko once more, but she's quick enough to kick him and ram the Scissor Blades into his back. However, she is unable to rip him apart and therefore cannot stun him with a kill. However, Ichiro grabs the Scissor Blades by letting his scythe fall. Apparently he's trying to pull them through his body.

"Should listen to Senketsu while you have the chance." he mentions.

"His weapon!" Senketsu reacts. Ryuko could run, but then she leaves her most valuable weapon behind, and she can't afford that, hence why she grabs Ichiro's scythe, ramming it directly into his body. Blood leaves his mouth, yet he laughs. The Life Fibers on the scythe produce heat that starts burning Ryuko's hands, causing her to let it fall - but at least she is able to kick Ichiro into one of the aquariums. Glass breaks, water flows, fishes flow out and jump around on the ground, light shimmers, and Ryuko runs towards Ichiro while trying to resist the flood of water. She is able to catch her Scissor Blades, yet Ichiro can grab his own weapon out of his body as well. Ryuko tries to attack once more, but Ichiro predicts the attack and grabs the Scissor Blades with Life Fibers.

"Oh fuck!" she mumbles and runs towards Ichiro as he is about to throw the blades behind him. Ryuko, thanks to Senketsu's abilities, materializes into Life Fibers just as he tries to attack Ichiro.

"Oh gosh darn." he mumbles when he realizes what Ryuko does and all of a sudden, she appears in front of him and rams him onto the ground. Ryuko grabs the scissor blades once more to finish off Ichiro, but...

... pain flows through her body, and blood falls into his face, as Ryuko notices the scythe is inside Ryuko's upper body.

"Ah... shit... that,... really hurts." she mumbles in pain. Ichiro pulls out the scythe, grabs Ryuko and throws her against the broken glass. Ryuko tries to grab her weapons once more, yet the wound is too heavy and drains from her power - she can be lucky it didn't kill her. Ichiro kicks the Scissor Blades away and finally grabs the young woman.

"The only one who's bleeding here is you." Ichiro smiles and rams his hand into Ryuko's upper body where he grabs her heart out of it. Ryuko moans in pain - and then she, and Senketsu, can see her heart, pumping quickly in front of her eyes.

"You seem worried, Matoi. Is something wrong?"

Ryuko doesn't answer but bites her teeth together.

"Facing Darkness... with a brave heart." Ichiro grins and slowly puts pressure onto her heart.

"AAAAAAAARRRRRRGGGGHHHH"

Senketsu tries to lower her pain, and a few seconds later, Ichiro puts her heart back into her body. Ryuko falls to the ground, holding her hand onto the large wound on her upper body, trying to catch some air. As she looks up towards the Director, he's looking at her with an disgusted look.

And then, he kicks her face, rendering her unconscious. Everything goes dark.

...

A few hours later...

...

Motor engine sounds. The Mankanshoku's hug and comfort each other although it's not deniable they are still afraid. Mako's sitting next to Nui, and it's clear she feels uncomfortable next to her. Nui however doesn't care. She just focuses on the road and the GPS sometimes. Looks like they will reach their destination soon. It's 7 AM now and still dark.

A few cars pass Nui.

"Turn left." the GPS says in an calm, male voice. Nui turns to the left. Mako notices how cold hearted and calm she looks at the area... it's as if she rather examines it to see if she can use it to her advantage rather than taking it as what it is - a simple road near the coast, with a forest to the left.

"... uhm... Nui... right?"

Nui doesn't answer.

"Are you... uhm... Ryuko's... are you really..."

Still, no answer.

"You... aren't saying anything."

"..."

"Well uhm... thanks for... protecting us." Mako says grateful, if scared. Nui turns her head to Mako. A stiff, empty gaze. No smile, no mimic in her face, just a simple, empty gaze. As if all feelings and emotions finally left her.

"Can we somehow... make up for it?"

Nui looks back at the road.

"You don't like to talk, do you?"

"..."

"Are you... angry at us?"

"..."

"I mean... after all I... probably am a bit guilty for... that... thing with your... uhm, arms... and..."

"Be quiet, will you..."

"I... I'm sorry, I didn't wanted to... okay." Mako answers careful and quiet.

Nui continues driving. She drives into the forest. Mako takes a look at the GPS. They seem to be in the prefecture of Chiba - the location where Ryuko's Matoi Mansion is. However, Mako doesn't have any idea where Nui is driving to.

"Are you alright, my child?" Sukuyo asks Mako.

"Yes, I'm okay, mum."

"I just hope... we can trust her..." Mataro mumbles unsure.

"You can." Nui answers cold. Everyone is dead quiet all of a sudden. Nui stops the car a few minutes later when she arrives at a small, seemingly quiet house. Weirdly enough, constructs have been built around it - figures, traps, all sorts of crazy buildings... it is surreal. Nui leaves the car.

"Stay here." Nui orders and grabs her weapon. Then she walks through the area and takes a look at the various traps. Bear traps, spikes, even explosives... and this should be the place where Mako's family is safe? Nui takes a look at one of the traps.

"Must have been made recently." she mentions and walks towards the house. Lights are on. She can hear someone work, but the windows are covered. Nui walks back to the car.

"Get out." Nui says cold, letting the family leave the car.

"What is this place?" Sukuyo wonders.

"So many traps..." Mataro mentions.

"Do they have food here?" Barazo asks.

"Not now, dad." Mako mentions and stays behind Nui while her family waits at the car, only following Nui very slowly.

"Wait. I'll knock on the door."

"Uhm... okay. Be careful." Mako says worried. Nui knocks on the door. She can hear how a machine stops working, and then, steps and a female voice. When the door opens, Nui aims at it.

A young woman with engineer's clothes and large student glasses as well as a few bandages appears. Mako recognizes her instantly.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! MAIKO!?" Mako yells surprised. Nui looks at Mako confused.

"MAIKO OGURE!?" she continues to yell. Maiko grins worried.

"WOULD THAT FREAK STOP AIMING AT ME, PLEASE!?" Maiko reacts and raises her hands.

"Nui, this is Maiko, she's really kind and crazy, you'll like her, I definitely like her, she is funny, hehe!" Mako grins and walks under Nui's weapon. Mako grins mischievous.

"Hey, hehe! Would be really kind if you wouldn't blow out my lights now!"

Nui looks at Mako, then Maiko, then Mako, then Maiko, then to her weapon, then she lowers it.

"Uh, didn't you decapitated yourself?" Maiko asks curious.

"I did."

"How are you alive then?"

"I'm a ghost, as you can see." Nui answers cold. Maiko nods unsure, smiles and looks at the Mankanshokus, and her eyes grow large once again.

"So uh... what are you guys doing here at 7 AM with this uh... very kind and totally not dangerous tailor from REVOCS at my house?" Maiko asks curious.

"Long story! Can we get in!?"

"Uhhhh, of course, sure, but before, you guys..." and then, all the Mankanshoku's storm her house and accidentally throw down a few

things from the shelves.

"Sorry!" Mako yells.

"Well at least they didn't hit the my signed comic of "How to get away with stealing a tank from the military base next to your home in three steps!" Ahem." Maiko mentions to herself and looks up to Nui who throws a cold gaze at her.

"So uhm... what leads you to my... sweet home, Miss... what was your name again?"

"Nui Harime. Are these idiots safe here?" Nui asks.

"Well SAFE is NOT the correct word BUUUUUUUUUUUUUUT we could meet, Ryuko, there they will be sa..."

"Ryuko is not at home."

"How do you..."

"Ryuko is at Neo-REVOCS."

"But she said you should bring her friends to me?"

"Yes. So they are not safe here?"

Maiko shakes her head. Nui rolls her eyes.

"... how did I deserve all of this..." Nui mumbles annoyed and enters the house. Maiko takes a look around, makes her hair and closes the door. She still has the same hair style like years ago, but thanks to her profession, she looks more dirty. However, she seem's to like the work she does.

...

A light goes on. It's weak. Ryuko is hanging on a ceiling. As she looks around, she notices that Senketsu is not on her body anymore,

but hanging in front of her. There seems to be a closed door, but light is behind it. Ryuko has shivers due to the cold temperature in the room, and other than her body and the ground below her, she can't see anything except for Senketsu. The door opens. It's Ichiro, wearing his pink coat.

"Good morning, Ryuko!" Ichiro says.

"... hnggh... crap."

"You like cursing, do you? Did you know that words lose power when you constantly use them? It's about the pacing. A well placed "Fuck you" hits much harder than constantly saying it."

"... whatever. You ain't... getting anything from me."

"I know." he smiles and pets Ryuko's shoulder twice. She's wearing just a white shirt and black trousers that aren't part of Senketsu however. At least the phiol with the cure is still in Senketsu's pockets.

"I mean... I did expect you to escape but I didn't expect it so soon. You could have taken a look at the building first and sabotage. But really... that's all? Isn't that kind of weird? I mean, this Aquarium you led us to was pretty fun and this bar, slash restaurant slash whatever was also rather interesting... but oh well, I guess I can't expect everything from you."

"I guess I didn't do so bad then?"

"Not at all, Matoi, I'm grateful and the Life Fibers as well." Ichiro answers and puts down his coat. He sighs and walks towards Ryuko.

"So... is this the part where you'll sew a new Kamui on my skin as I already predicted?"

"No, this is the part where I will bore you with long and seemingly deep speeches. Might be annoying for you but hey, you know how I

am, I just like to talk and annoy others." Ichiro answers.

"Great. Then go ahead."

Ichiro grabs a desk from the dark.

"You gonna torture me now? Heh, ain't going to help you either."

"I suppose so, mon cher, but see, I like pain. I like hurting people. I think hurting people shows them they are still alive. I can feel pain but I survive everything, but that is alright, since... how do you humans call that?" he asks. Ichiro looks at Ryuko.

"I can't get rid of the feeling I appear like a monster to you."

"I wonder why." she answers. Ichiro lays down his bowtie and grabs out a clone of Nui.

"Look what I found." he smiles childish.

"A stupid clone."

"Oh yes, a stupid clone with black arms!" Ichiro grins and carefully pulls on the arms.

"Can you hear bells ringing?" he asks. Ryuko doesn't answer. What is there to answer anyway?

"Spit out what you are trying to tell me, dude."

"Alright, let me spit out what I want to tell you." he smiles and lays down the clone again.

"Ryuko. When all the Life Fibers you and your friend Senketsu died, billions of memories and voices simply vanished. I could have been one of those as well. Now, as you know, no one who dies is truly again, you always live on in some way, and I was the only lucky person to resurrect from the dead. When the High Entity banned my dearest Doppelgänger, they... splitted a shard of her personality and

left it, and that resulted into me. Before, I was but a simple Life Fiber. Now I am exactly what Ragyo Kiryuin always wanted - minus the sad little memories. I think I am a monster. What defines a monster though?"

"Being an asshole like you?"

"That as well, probably, but besides that, they are incredibly ugly and scary. It's possible they also don't have a soul. They simply exist so that the world has something they can call cruel. But am I really all of this? Do I look like a monster, Senketsu?" Ichiro asks curious.

"You act like one at the very least." he answers.

"Look, my point is, you can't just aim your finger at someone and say "Oh look this guy is a monster" because they most probably are not. It takes the power in the word away. If I call you a whore, does that make you one? A whore is after all nothing but a woman that sells her body for sexual activities. Is that something you do, Ryuko?"

"No?"

"So, are you a whore?"

"No."

"But if I call you one."

"Then you are wrong."

"Right. So when someone calls the High Entity, me or my Doppelgänger a monster, are we monsters then?"

"..."

"What? No answer? Not sure what to say?"

"... heh. Think you got me now, hm?" Ryuko grins. Ichiro doesn't grin back. He seems dead serious.

"Am I a monster?"

"... not... from the looks of it, no."

"Or am I? Do you know everything about me? How do you know I am one, if you don't know what happened before? Look at Satsuki. A lot of people would call her a monster if you take a look at her former students of Honnouji-Academy. Is she a monster in your eyes?"

"No. What are you trying to tell me?"

"Are you really that stupid? Alright. Simple said: You know me or my Doppelgänger and your mother for a long time, think of both of them as monsters and sick maniacs AND with the last point I even agree with you because in the end, we all are insane! BUT... not we are the monsters. That is you, Ryuko. You and your friend Senketsu. Remind yourself of this one time you turned into an abomination."

"Yeah cause Nui provoked me."

"And that made you a monster. Deep inside you is a monster, isn't there? Human-Life Fiber Hybrid. You ain't uniform, you are two sides of the same coin - human and Life Fiber, love and hate, human and Life Fiber, love and hate. You humans think you all are heroes and the greatest when the truth is that all of you are just annoying brats that can't even be honest to themselves! Of all the life forms I've met in the hundreds of years I exist as a mere Life Fiber thread I could have not imagined to find something as ugly and cruel as you."

"... and why?"

"You... *breathes in*... you ain't human nor Life Fiber. You are cruel to Life Fibers, scare them and when I take a look into your eyes there is the soul of a stupid little brat that still cries up to this day because her damn father got zero'd! I mean, haha, you slam everyone away who comes close to you!"

"..."

"But Ryuko! Is it your fault that you are neither a true human or a Life Fiber?" he asks. Ryuko doesn't answer.

"No, it's not your fault of course. But you, your sister, and every human keeps treating us Life Fibers like trash. Like monsters. Unless it's this Kamui. Then it's something different. And why? Because you know him." Ichiro says and grabs Senketsu.

"I could tear him apart."

"Wait! Don't do this."

"Why not?"

"Senketsu hasn't done anything!"

"And what have WE done to YOU!?"

"You... you guys tried to destroy this damn world!"

"And that makes us the evil ones here!? That makes us monsters?! Haven't you guys destroyed your own world already?! Look at your planet! Wars, dead people, lack of food..." Ichiro reacts and throws Senketsu back at the wall. Then, he points his finger towards Ryuko as he approaches her again.

"You can't call anyone a monster just by seeing them. No, you need to know them. You need to understand their motives and their past. To solve the question I asked before: I, I truly am a monster, because you know everything there is to know about me! I am nothing but an ice cold bastard that loves to hurt people, but even then, the things I do... I do them all for the Life Fibers. I know everything about you. I find you are a monster. Your live must have been really difficult. People must have hate you in school. How sad. Could have tried to be better than them though."

"Shut your hole."

"Now, there is one thing I remember really well, my dear. You personally didn't do anything to me but to your mother and my Doppelgänger. She? She does care, but she would never say it because she tries to ignore it and see you as what you are, but I... I find the things you did very questionable."

"... and that would be?"

(AN: I suggest you look up Nui Harime's theme on YouTube and listen to it while reading.... You might have an idea what comes next. This is what scared me of posting this. But it's necessary for the story. I'm sorry for what comes next.)

"Remember when you took the Scissor Blades from my Doppelgänger and cut off her arms? That must have been really funny for you. Do you have any idea how much it hurts losing your arms? How much worth they actually have? I'm sure she would never go to you and tell you "Ryuko, you took my arms, that wasn't very nice of you." but I can tell you that because I am not as forgiving as her. Your mother was very hurt when you destroyed Shinra Koketsu as well. She really committed suicide in front of her daughter! Hah."

"So?"

"Well... all of this is stuff that is kept in mind. It's a memory. Gosh, she yelled like a little child when you stomped on her arms!" Ichiro smiles happy. Senketsu notices how Life Fibers slowly materialize something in the air.

"Now, the thing is, since you got caught escaping, I was thinking of what should I do with you. After all, I need to deal with a true monster. The Life Fibers that are left made a pretty clear choice, granted I had some influence on it."

Ryuko doesn't react. She feels uncomfortable. Ichiro leans his head towards Ryuko, looking at her confused.

"You call us monsters?"

"..."

"Question, Ryuko Matoi!" Ichiro grins.

"Hm?"

Ichiro raises his arm. A large... sharp... needle... materializes. And fear spreads in Ryuko's body.

"You... ehehe, you look like you could use an helping arm or two now." he grins.

"Ohhhh, Matoi is going to LOSE HER ARMS NOW! AHAHA!"

"Oh fuck you!" Ryuko yells and in the next second, the large needle blade made out of the same material like his scythe tears apart Ryuko's right arm entirely. Blood flows. Ryuko screams full of pain, Senketsu does not even dare to look.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRGGGHHHHH!"

"Wonder how long you can endure!" he laughs and throws the arm onto the ground. Ryuko tries to breath, and then, the next slash occurs, ripping apart Ryuko's left arm brutally, yet perfectly accurate.

"GRAAAWWWWGGHHHHHH!"

"You look like you want to cry, Matoi, what's up? Ever shown pity for ANY of US?!"

"FUCK YOU! ARRGGGGHHH... !" Ryuko yells painful and with tears in her eyes, looking at Senketsu.

"This Kamui won't help you out of here!" and pulls on the last Life Fibers that are left on Ryuko's open shoulders. Ryuko cries.

"You cry, but I'm not even done yet!" he yells like an psycho.

"I THOUGHT IT'S JUST THE AR... AARRRRRRGGGGHHHH!"

Her legs are both cut perfectly apart.

"What was it you said? Sorry, bitch?" he asks and stomps Ryuko's limbs in front of her eyes. They dissolve into dead Life Fibers that hover up and finally disappear into thousands of small cells.

...

Masaru stands on the other side of the room. He can only hear Ryuko's screams. Couturiers in red robes listen to the screams. Masaru tries to keep his calm but you can see very well on his body language this does not work. He tries to breath in and out. Then, the door opens, and a bloody Ichiro appears.

"What a mess. Send a few Ashigaru into the room, Masaru, and make sure everything's cleaned up."

"... a-and Matoi...?"

"Quarters of the Grand Couturier. She's going to sleep for a while."

"Y-yes Director." Masaru answers uncalm. Ichiro leaves the hallway with a bloody path behind him. The Couturiers follow him. As Masaru walks into the room, he tries to avoid his look towards Ryuko.

She's hanging there. Tears fall from her face. Blood drops onto the ground. She's shivering. Trembling. Only thanks to Ichiro instantly bandaging the wounds, she can survive this massacre.

Just mumbling is hearable before she drops unconscious.

"I'm... I... I'm sorry..."

Senk... etsu...

Sats... uki...

Mako...

Nui..."

What I Once Was

AN: Hey friends! Have fun with the new chapter! Now we're going to experience the coolest parts of the story ;) I bet y'all will love it, I surely do already! :D

Silence.

...

...

...

Suddenly, a shining white light at the horizon. Everything is black. Everything is cold. Everything... is silent. Here and there, a single Life Fiber hovers around. Slowly but steady, they collect on one point, gently, and they take their time - time that may have a different definition than in the real world. Has time stopped? Shortly after, a Life Fiber Being appears, with female body properties, a spiky hair style, if you can call it one, arms and legs that have holes in them, and which are only held together by the Life Fibers inside them, and empty, orange-red ish eyes. And then, the being falls onto the ground.

Suddenly, it causes sounds that remind one of a cough. The dull, hand like ends of the arms claw onto the by dead Life Fibers inhabited surface. Several lights appear. When the Being looks up, it can hardly move it's head. Loose Life Fibers fall off of it, and in the distance, more and more white lights appear. They give sounds away - storms, laughing, fire, voices, rain, everything. As the Being stands up, the sounds it tries to do cannot be understood, hence why Life Fibers start singing quietly.

"Ryyyuuuukoooo..." they sing in a quiet and calm tone. The monster Ryuko now became looks around. It's so empty here. So sad and

melancholic. And when she raises up her "hands", she realizes... that they are nothing but like shred clothes, with holes everywhere. As if someone would have tried to sew or cut something and they horribly failed. They aren't wounds, but any human who would see a Being like the one Ryuko is now would be righteously scared. This is Ryuko Matoi now. A Life Fiber Being. One of many parasites.

She would start screaming, but she can't. All she can do is give a few calm sounds away. It becomes even more surreal when she takes a look at her equally shred legs that rather lie on the ground instead of standing. When she tries to take a few steps, she notices, how loose Life Fiber parts hang on her. It doesn't even feel wrong or hurts, it feels right... but that may be the horrible thing about it, if it's not the appearance already. More lights appear, one of it directly in front of Ryuko. She slowly walks towards it. Life Fibers hover next to her in this dark realm where the Life Fibers reside. No matter where she looks around, the halls do not end. Arriving at the light, she realizes it is a tall, white Life Fiber, ten times taller than she is, and it appears to be more like a pillar than anything. Do they hold this world together?

"Sing with us..." the Life Fibers say to her. The language is anything but human. They really are tones that, combined together, result in a melody.

"Feel them... live them..." they continue to sing in their inhuman yet somehow calm and beautiful language. Ryuko tries to form a fist, but that attempt fails as her hand becomes more like a ball of wool... or Life Fibers, in this case. She shakes her head in disbelief, or so it at least looks like, for Life Fiber Beings cannot properly express their emotions physically. That is why they sing. Quiet sounds come from the white Life Fiber - it's her voice! When she touches the Life Fiber, she suddenly dissolves into thousands of Fibers that dissolve once more...

...

...

...

"What the fuck?" Ryuko mumbles surprised and takes a look around. This is the Masamune High School! She takes a look around, perplexed, unable to properly process what the hell she just witnessed. Furthermore, she notices how she wears her everyday cloths. Her jacket, a backpack, a blue jeans... and around her are a few teenagers who seem to have a problem with her. She's pushed on the ground and eventually lands in the mud.

"Hey!" she reacts annoyed.

"You think it's funny breaking Goro's nose you bitch? Think we'll let you go just like that?!" a young man asks in a bad mood.

"Goro? Who..." and a kick hits Ryuko's nose.

"Stupid whore." another guy says. Two girls grin at Ryuko while she's lying on the ground.

"And where's your fuckboy Kaori, huh?" the first guy asks and drags Ryuko up. Ryuko spits into the guy's face."

"Brave, Matoi!" he grins. Ryuko suddenly gets out of his stance and punches him into the face three times with well placed fist punches, causing him to fall down with a broken nose himself. The girls quickly get scared.

"Anyone else?!" she yells annoyed. Another gonk attacks Ryuko. She drops her backpack, runs towards the guy and when he tries to grab her, Ryuko rams him like a bull to the ground and slams his face several times until he starts whimpering.

"... ow... please... stop..." he mumbles scared. Ryuko stands up. The school bell rings.

Somehow, everything is weird. Why is she back in her old school? The question is quickly answered as she looks up to the sky, seeing

the white Life Fibers that hold everything together.

"... so I guess I am in one of my memories?" she wonders and takes another look around. There is a white Life Fiber at the school entrance. By approaching the entrance, she watches how the world around her slowly dissolves. The sky goes dark, objects dissolve, the ground cracks apart and lets Life Fibers out of the gaps, and as everything is gone, Ryuko turns into a Life Fiber Being once more.

She's back in the dark halls. The switch between human and Life Fiber body is indescribable. If one had to describe it, the only way how it feels like is by saying it's like a piercing pain that however feels good. Like thousands of needles that pierce you quickly several times, but instead of you bleeding, you'd joy up, embrace the light pain, until, after a few seconds, you become a parasite. New white Life Fibers appear far in the background. Something is moving over there as well.

Approaching the place, she can see another Life Fiber Being restlessly travelling through the halls. The Being, of which it's head is half gone, looks at Ryuko - it moves it's head slightly to the side and then walks pass her. Ryuko shrugs. She starts to wonder how she came here, when she was on earth last time. Has the High Entity appeared? Or what could have brought her here? And where is Senketsu? Is he dead? Maybe the answer is somewhere here...

...

Gamagoori sighs annoyed as he sits in the command center alone. Something keeps him busy. The tall man takes a look around - nothing special is going on. The only thing that slightly looks interesting is the suitcase with the documents Nui brought with her. It's lying on the table. Tsumugu enters the room. Both look at each other, but don't say anything, and briefly after, Satsuki appears. She seems tired, not even desperate anymore, it's more like she slowly loses it in a subtle way, as if everything slowly falls apart... and to an extent, it does. It's strange for Gamagoori to see Satsuki lacking of so much resolve and strength. The woman walks towards the table

and takes a look at the documents. Tsumugu just smokes a cigarette and waits. Satsuki starts whispering.

"... land wide advertisement center of Neo-REVOCS... in Nagoya... third heaviest guarded building in all of Japan..."

Satsuki turns the pages.

"... "Honnouji-Fortress"... attacking it will result in suicide... academy has been rebuilt... top of the world, where a sacrifice will be made..."

And another page.

"... the High Entity... Terraforming..."

"Lady Satsuki." Gamagoori says and stands up. Satsuki looks at her old friend cold hearted.

"I failed."

Satsuki looks back onto her documents. His face is full of regret. Tsumugu takes a look at his bandage - he really has been lucky Nui hasn't hit the bone.

"I failed in my task to secure your sister. If it is your wish, I will punish myself for my disappointing beha..."

"Gamagoori, shut up!" Satsuki says angry.

"Ryuko is gone. You didn't gave enough. I am not sure whether I should be simply disappointed or angry at you. Do something else and leave me alone. I don't want to talk with ANYONE here."

"... I understand." Gamagoori answers and leaves the room. When he walks to his own room, Sanageyama appears and speaks to him in the halls.

"Hey bro, what's wrong? You look down."

"... I failed."

"Cause of Ryuko?"

"Yes."

"Don't let this eat you up man. You couldn't do anything against this weird psycho anyway, still surprised she actually left you alive."

"And still, all of this harms Lady Satsuki. I gave her my word to protect Matoi when she arrived in the med bay, and I failed."

"Yeah well, that shit happens, Ryuko's probably kicking asses at Neo-REVOCS. I wouldn't be too worried about it. Besides, Satsuki doesn't look too healthy anyway, it might be this stupid disease that eats her up."

"... I can't be not worried about it."

"Sure as hell you can. Want a beer?"

"I don't drink, you know that."

"Something else I can do for ya?"

"Uzu, if there is something you can do for me, I will let you know. I need time for myself right now." Gamagoori pleads. Sanageyama nods and pats his shoulder.

"It's gonna be cool again, don't worry."

"Thanks." Gamagoori answers and enters his room. He sits down onto his bed. It's afternoon.

"... maybe I could help Jakuzure with her concert..."

...

Sounds ring out in the kitchen, and a tasty odor leaves it. The Mankanshoku's seem to cook in Maiko's kitchen, preparing a nice meal for the evening. Maiko in the meantime simply sits at the table, looking perplexed. Ingredients fly around, the family seems to have a lot of fun.

Then, Nui joins Maiko at the table. Both are watching the spectacle without any words, Maiko confused, Nui absolutely apathic.

"Why me, Ryuko..." Maiko wonders. An ingredient flies into Maiko's direction - she dodges and notices how a plate behind her falls apart.

"Can't we just ORDER SOMETHING!?" Maiko yells.

"No chance!" Mataro answers.

"My beautiful home..." she whispers. Then she turns her head to Nui.

"So! How long are you alive again already, how did all of that happen and how the hell did you convince Ryuko to protect these weirdos?!" Maiko grins.

"Why do you care?"

"Well uh, heh, just asking! Nice outfit by the way."

"It's a disgrace."

"Why?"

"I look like an idiot in it. Vest, yellow trousers... poor people wear that, I should be wearing something actually well tailored."

"I see. Well I like it! I assume you like to sit here as much as I do?"

"I was thinking of going back into my room if I see what these braindead... people do."

"How about you don't go back to your room and instead take a look at my garage?! You'll like it."

"I won't."

"Wanna bet?"

Nui sighs and stands up. Maiko does it as well.

"Hey Miss Nui, do you want to help us?!" Mako asks happy. Nui ignores Mako and leaves the room with Maiko. The shaggy engineer walks through the various rather unclean rooms as if they would be easily to move in, while Nui tries to be very careful she doesn't walk into something, climb up chairs and books. Arriving at the small garage next to her house, Maiko moves a shelf away. Behind there is a secret entrance.

"I got that from movies, you know?" Maiko grins.

"Good for you." Nui answers unimpressed. As both women walk through the entrance, Nui notices how much different the hall is. White walls, white grounds, bright lights, as if this is some sort of rich secret underground facility, and the young psychopath isn't getting rid of the feeling she just entered a bad spy movie. Maiko grins mischievous as she enters the hall.

"You built all of this?" Nui asks. The hall is large enough to store an entire arsenal.

"Yeah I did! This used to be a basement but I was bored and so I just renovated it, now it's looking ten times cooler!"

"... okay."

"Nudist Beach still exists, yup?"

"They do, yes."

"Cool, cause I've got something for them and for you too!"

"I'm sure you do." Nui answers sarcastic, not believing there is anything of interest for her or the naked apes. However, there is something hidden under an extremely large red carpet. Maiko runs at it and grabs the carpet.

"Watch this!" Maiko grins and moves the carpet away. Nui's eyes largen up.

"What the fu... friggin, where did you got the blueprints for the REVOCS tank!?" Nui asks shocked as she see's the only existing Main Battle Tank REVOCS produced!

"It's amazing, isn't it!? When you and you weird crazy CEO exited live, REVOCS was free to visit and I was boring SOOOOOOOOOOO I asked Satsuki Kiryuin if I could very RANDOMLY say hello to REVOCS, and when I did I kind of, uh, breached through the safety protocols, after all, no one was there, and in the underground factories I found this beauty! Really though, why would you develop a tank if you guys were a clothing company?! I mean, this thing got EVERYTHING! Regenerating Life Fiber armor, inciniary rounds that will shred apart all Life Fiber cloths that exist, a control system even idiots can use... oh and I added a drink holder."

Nui looks at Maiko confused.

"At... this point you should know an "evil" company like REVOCS isn't just happy with clothing, if you want to refer to your "movies."

"I mean, I don't know, haven't heard much of you guys except "REVOCS bad, REVOCS destroy!"

sigh "Yes we worked on weapons and vehicles because I was too good at working on new clothes so Ma... Lady Ragyo said we should expand into different areas."

"Ahhh. Neat, neat. Really was one hell of a work to get this tank into my home, you have no clue what the government thought when they

saw a REVOCS tank used by the head of trap department of Japan's most dangerous academy!"

"I don't care."

"Alright good, BUT there is something else you might like to see..." and then Nui can hear something behind her. There is a cage with a red carpet. Nui walks to said cage and listens up. She knows that sound.

"Is that one of my..." and Nui removes the carpet.

"... COVERS." she reacts and smiles very slightly.

"Look at you. Imprisoned by this weirdo." Nui mumbles.

"Well yeah I am a weirdo but I am a cool weirdo! I found that fella in a tree, must have hung there for a long time. I think since it wasn't in the orbit when Shinra Koketsu poofed away the thing survived. I wanted to examine it sometime." Maiko explains.

"You wouldn't hurt my COVERS, would you?" Nui asks calm.

"... well uh..."

"You can be glad you haven't examined it. They are tailored to eat."

"But I can't let it go either."

"No need to. I'll deal with it. Look." Nui answers and opens the cage. Maiko walks a few steps back as the COVERS moves to her.

"Stop." Nui orders. The COVERS suddenly stops and looks at it's mistress.

"How do you do that!?"

"I'm it's mother, so to speak. After all, I created it."

"I see. I uh..."

"Hopp hopp, shrink already." Nui orders. The COVERS shrinks and lands into Nui's hand. Then, she holds it up.

"See. Now it's all lovely."

"Damn. How does that even work? Is that a Life Fiber trick too?"

"It is, yes." she answers and puts the COVERS away. Then she notices Mako who was watching them a while. When Mako is spotted, she quickly sneaks away again. Nui shrugs and looks back at Maiko.

"So yeah. This tank will help defend this insane family but I believe it's better if we visit Ryuko's mansion! It's easier to defend than my four walls, just in case something happens - besides, there's more space than here for ambushes, so I say we visit it as soon as possible! This evening would be great What do you think?!" Maiko grins. Matoi Mansion.

Matoi Mansion...

"... if you insist." Nui answers.

"Hell yeah I do, it's awesome!" Maiko laughs. Both leave the halls again, going back to the kitchen which is a literal battlefield now.

"You guys do know you gotta pay all of this!" Maiko yells.

"We'll ask Ryuko who will ask Satsuki, don't worry, we will pay, haha!" Mataro laughs.

"Satsuki?! I thought she's dead!"

"Satsuki's alive." Nui answers.

"It's getting crazier with every hour. And this Director guy is what, your brother?!"

"No, he's my Doppelgänger."

"Oh cool, does he want to destroy the world too?"

"Probably."

"And you don't?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Not in the mood to."

"Why did you wanted to destroy the world before?"

"Because I don't like humans."

"Oh I see, so it's this edgy thing where you dislike humans because it's cool or is it like..." and then Nui grabs Maiko on her clothes annoyed.

"If you don't have any idea who you are talking with, keeping your mouth closed sometimes can be the better solution - I got my reasons, darling." Nui reacts. Maiko grins.

"Hehe alright, alright, I was just curious!" Maiko answers and clears her throat, then she looks back to the Mankanshokus. Nui shakes her head and leaves the kitchen...

...

Stomping through the dark halls feels pointless. Is that really the place Life Fibers go to when they die? The thought of that lets Ryuko question if they really have to go there here. Most importantly, it leaves her with the question of whether she is still alive or not. Or did Ichiro killed her with severing all of her limbs. How does she know if she is dead or not? The next white Life Fiber is so far away, and she feels so lonely - so forgotten and lonely.

Eventually, Ryuko sits down and looks at her deformed, horrendous red body. If Satsuki would see her like that, she would experience a mental breakdown probably. Her whimpering is hearable. She can't even cry. She's just sitting there, unable to express any forms of emotion.

"Child..." she suddenly hears echoing through the halls. Ryuko looks up. No one is here.

"Ryuko..." is followed. Attempting an answer fails obviously, all that comes out of her sewn mouth are strange louds. You don't need to be an Life Fiber to realize none of the things she tries to say make sense. Red and white small Life Fibers hover around. It looks like they are about to materialize something just like Ryuko did before. The young woman looks to the Life Fibers. Slowly but steady, a Being appears she never saw before, but somehow, she's getting an assumption of what this is. As the Being finally materializes, it shines in white, gentle colours. Life Fibers move inside it, yet there is nearly no orange skin. It's eyes are empty, and some kind of cape hangs on the back of it's head, going to up to the "legs" which are woven together, making them look more like the lower part of a large dress.

"You've came back..." it says. Ryuko crawls back.

"Stay." it says. Ryuko moves her head a bit to the side. The strange, shining thing reaches it's arm out, which is dull. Ryuko tries to say something but can't, and briefly after, she carefully reaches her arm towards the monster like being as well. It's three heads taller than Ryuko.

"It has been quite some time..." it whispers and touches Ryuko's cheek briefly.

"Do I cause discomfort?"

"..."

"Oh... apologies. You... cannot speak any longer... your voice was so calm and lovely, you once sang a poem for us, you loved us... this happened decades ago."

"..."

"Let... me help you." the Being offers and holds both it's arms on Ryuko's head. A slight pain goes through her body, a few sudden movements, and then, Life Fibers leave her body, and sparks light up. Eventually, she falls onto the ground.

"Argh fuck!" she mumbles... and realizes she can talk all of a sudden.

"Is this... form of communication more to your liking?"

"... who are you?"

"... what a shame... you forgot everything... in human terms, you would call me "Hinata." I... am a High Entity." it answers. Entity Hinata. Ryuko takes a second to process that - so this is how one of the High Entities look like? And why does it talk to her as if it knows her?

"Am I dead?" Ryuko asks worried. Entity Hinata walks pass Ryuko who starts following it.

"Our... enforcer does take quite a few steps forward with his... deeds. But no... you are still alive."

"That bastard, he, he..."

"... took revenge, and it was righteous, as you provoked it, yet... horrible, nonetheless, and not to excuse." Hinata answers and forms some sort of white gate inside a large white Life Fiber, which he then shows at it.

"Enter it." he asks calm and polite. It looks like he doesn't want to harm her, at least not for the moment. Ryuko hesitates for a moment,

but as she touches the Life Fiber, she dissolves.

When she materializes again, she'll appear in a completely different place where it's bright and calm. A waterfall, beautiful flowers, a forest that looks kinda like the one Ryuko saw weeks ago, a wonderful blue ocean - the ground consists of white dirt, the sky is clear and blue... the entire place spreads calmness and a feeling of home. Briefly after, Entity Hinata appears at the beach. Ryuko walks towards the Entity.

"It's beautiful, isn't it?"

"... kind of, yeah. What's this place about?"

"It's a resting place. It consists of your memories. Your most beautiful ones. Interesting... this... park? And the... ocean? Is this how earth looks like?"

"Minus the beautiful look, yeah."

"Oh?"

"... eh, for the most parts at least."

"How sad."

Both Life Fiber Beings look at the ocean for a moment.

"What do you do here? These Entities... you one of them? I guess you wanted to talk with me?"

"My... other... personalities... they want to... talk with you - our highest excellency as well, and yet... it is physically contact it seeks with you. They do not know I am here, with you - yet they saw what the Director did... and they are grateful about it. I... do not share this joy."

"Oh yeah? And I should believe you that?"

"Ryuko... if this... war teaches us one thing... then... that there is a way, to let humans live together... with us..."

"You say us, as if I'd be one of you guys. I ain't though. I am..."

"... not human, not clothing. How... true. You... may be both too."

"... maybe."

"I... do not see your... murders as a good deed, but it is something you had to do... you... protected those you loved, and... I understand that. Yet the things humans call... parasites... us... we can be more than that, if we can develop... but avenging all the deaths you caused... is wrong."

"So you're the pacifist under the Entities?"

"I am the one... that still thinks, I am afraid."

"Okay. And what am I supposed to do? Walk up to my friends and tell them not every Life Fiber is a parasite? No one would believe that, you know that. All you guys did was causing terror."

"But you... did the same, did you not? After all... you are one of us. Is it not strange? Are there humans close to you... that killed nearly as many of us as you did? Did your human sister... kill too? I cannot remember her... killing as much as you did... yet you... you are like us. Of course you are. You are one of us, after all."

"I didn't had a choice god damn it! You guys wanted to destroy everything! You wanted to devour the entire world! And now I am the evil one here?!"

"You... are not evil. Our... enforcer is, as that is his entire purpose, from the very moment he existed on. But everyone else... we all are more than just pure destruction. Do not feel like you are evil... you only did what you had to do... just understand what you did when

you killed them all... how many hearts you broke... how much pain you caused... how many... voices cried."

"I do know that."

"Do you really? Or are you afraid of the truth?"

"The truth?"

"The truth is... despite all the things you've been told... despite all the dead... you are not evil... just like everyone."

"But your "enforcer" guy is?"

"No one... is born evil, my... dear Ryuko. Some are raised to be evil... some become evil without knowing it... but only the rarest living Beings make it their goal... as they truly plan evil things. In your line, this is normal. All of your family members share this trait."

"..."

"And yet... I see you, and the rest of your line, as normal Beings."

"Sorry, but there are clear lines, really."

"Truly... speak up."

"I get it if you fuck something up. I mean, I sure as hell did some evil things too! But like... I don't know, Nui for example! Does she think I like or forgive her all of a sudden just cause she helped me and saved Mako?! I may make her end less painful, that's all! Or do you think just because there are some of you who don't want to instantly eat up my friends we should let you get away with the things you guys wanna do?! Have you guys lost it!? Your weird ass Director turns people into damn Life Fibers! Why do we even stand here!? Care to tell me what you want now?!"

"As... I said... what the Director does... is something I myself cannot support. I want to help you... and then you help me."

"And why should I help you exactly? What do you offer? After all, you are one of the guys who sent that guy after me and my friends!"

"Indeed... and I want to make up for that."

"Make up for it!? This guy killed Soroi and Hoomaru! I want my life back! I want this stupid disease to be gone! I want this stupid Director and his even more stupid Doppelgänger girl to fuck off! And never come back!"

"That is not possible..."

"Then talking with you doesn't have any point." Ryuko answers, turns around and walks over the white meadow.

"Do you want to go back into your life? Do you wish your arms... your legs... your body back?"

Ryuko stands still.

"I will help you regain it. Your body will have to rest. This process... takes weeks... but I can speed it up... regenerate your limbs, just like your mother once did, in no time..."

"... black ones, huh?"

"Yes."

Ryuko sighs.

"... and what do you want me to do?"

"Learn." the Entity orders. The world goes dark once more, and the white Life Fibers appear. The Entity walks towards Ryuko and watches her reaction. As the Fibers touch the ground, five of them seem to shine brighter, appear larger, more stronger, and they somehow attract Ryuko. They even manipulate the area around them. If you take a very close look to them, you can see a scene

inside them. Something moves inside them. Even sounds are hearable, and temperature leaves them.

"These memories... belong either to you... or to your family. Your "sisters"... you... your parents... watch them. Learn them. You'll see... maybe you consider your thoughts... maybe... maybe they change your decisions up to the end of this journey."

"Decisions?"

"You'll see. I shall let you go, whatever you choose to do."

"I... can manipulate them?"

"Yes. Should you wish... to intervene... and remove certain people... you shall be able to do so. Should you wish revenge for... the one who saved your life when you were a mere baby... you shall get that revenge... and should you wish to find absolution... you shall get that absolution. Remind yourself of the consequences. You can save lives... and you can end them. I trust on what you humans call... empathy."

"And what awaits me there?"

"Agony. Pain. But also Love. Pining. Happiness. Death. Sadness."

"... and what do you want in exchange for my body?"

"Help me... end this conflict. Help me find a way... to save us, without bloodshed."

"That's impossible. And you know that."

"And yet you find a way... you always do... you did it with Shinra Koketsu, too, after all..." the Entity says and starts dissolving.

"Hey wait!"

"Farewell, Ryuko Matoi. Do not forget... you are both human... and clothing... and at the same time... none of it."

The Entity disappears.

Ryuko takes a look around. Some of the memories are far away, others are not. The one closest to her plays out sounds of a howling storm. The Fiber that is farthest away can't even be heard however. Ryuko carefully approaches the first memory. Arriving at it, there is a moving image in it - the point of view is behind Satsuki standing on top of a mountain, and items that however cannot really be described as they are broke in thousands of shards, like a broken window.

She carefully touches the memory and dissolves. As she dissolves, she can hear Satsuki's voice - screams of wrath, chuckling, battle sounds, revenge fantasies, howling wind, loyal students, Nonon, Gamagoori, Sanageyama, Houka, Ryuko, Ragyo...

...

Medical equipment can be heard. Masaru sits next to Ryuko. He's in the room of the Grand Couturier with her and Senketsu. Ryuko lies on a comfortable bed from the looks of it, sleeping however. Senketsu hangs next to her on the wall and looks down to her and Masaru. It's early evening.

"A wonder she is still alive." Masaru mumbles.

"Will she ever regenerate?"

"... I can only attach artificial limbs on her, robotic ones, but... *sigh*"

"Did that Doppelgänger spoke of helping her?"

"No. He will leave her the way she is, until this High Entity arrives. I don't know what will happen after that."

"I don't even know what to do. Sometimes... I wish I would be more than a Kamui... like I had actual legs and arms... and a head..."

"I understand." Masaru answers and looks at the instruments. Ryuko luckily at least isn't knocking on death's door. The door opens - it's Ichiro. Without any words, he walks towards Ryuko and Masaru who now pretends to despise both of them.

"Her Kamui has been quiet since I appeared, and Matoi does not move at all."

"As to expect. Masaru, I will have to lend Ryuko soon - her sister Satsuki should find out how she's doing after all. Give the men the order to prepare a small photo shooting." Ichiro chuckles. Masaru nods and leaves the room. Then, Ichiro looks to Senketsu - the Kamui looks back at Ichiro with an evil gaze.

"Something wrong, Senketsu?" Ichiro asks kind.

"... I got nothing to say to you."

"But you look at me as if I would have done something to you. What is it? It was just Ryuko. And let's be honest... she did deserve it, didn't she?"

"Sometimes a gaze is enough for a comment."

"Sure is, Senketsu! But you see... I am quite interested in your gaze. If you look at me like this, it only confirms to me I am doing everything correct. People like you shouldn't exist. You're not loyal, you are nothing more than a pile of red wool that sadly is a part of us."

"Ryuko is a friend. You just don't understand that because you don't know what friends are."

"Oh I do understand the meaning of friendship. Friends stay together. Friends are always there for each other. Friends protect

each other, talk with each other, tell them if they made a mistake, they support each other and they go through life even if they had a conflict before."

"..."

"I know very well what a friend is - but in the end, they are mere objects just like everything else, except they are more useful since they don't run away, and they can extend your arms when you yourself can't reach whatever you desire. Everyone has to trust you but you cannot trust anyone, because if you do, you can only get disappointed. You use people until there is no point in using them anymore. Then you throw them away. What even makes you like this hybrid?"

"Ryuko gives me the feeling I am more than clothing. She was the first friend I had."

"But in the end it's just a feeling and not reality. There is this illusion that we Life Fibers wear humans, but that is just a lie from this deceased Kiryuin. I wouldn't be surprised if she would have doubted that illusion to the end. After all, she killed herself to escape her fate. Even... even these naked perverts are more worth than her."

"A lie?"

"Life Fibers are more than clothes, my friend, even you are more than clothes, and you should know that by now. Look at my Couturiers. They aren't clothes. They hide their true self under clothes. Just like you hide your true self, by being a Kamui. I could make you a human being. I could also make you a Life Fiber Being just like the Couturiers. That is your true form.

Miss Ragyo Kiryuin simply saw Life Fibers as cloths and for what her plan was like, it was decent enough, but truth be told that we are not clothing, but actual Beings. Thinking anything else is absolutely ridiculous. And the Life Fiber Sickness proves my point."

"You are full of hate, aren't you?"

"I'm not full of hate, Senketsu. I simply just know what I am capable of." Ichiro smiles and touches her hair.

"And that would be?"

"Everything, Senketsu. Simply... everything." he answers and leaves the room, turning the lights off, leaving Senketsu and Ryuko in the dark.

...

Knock, Knock, Knock!

"Miss Kiryuin?" Hoomaru asks.

"Come in." the young Satsuki answers and turns around.

"Rei."

"The evening dinner is done. Your mother is expecting you."

"Is that her wish?"

"It always is."

"... give me two minutes."

"Understood." Hoomaru answers and leaves Satsuki's room. Satsuki shakes her head and puts the pen away she had in her hand. When she takes a look at the table, drawings of Honnouji-Academy are visible. She even wrote all sorts of horror fantasies about killing her mother and everyone involved in her plans - Hoomaru, Nui, her butler Kuroido... everyone. She rather wrote them to have a way of expressing her feelings. In the end, she rips the notes apart and throws them into the trash bucket so that no one will find out. For the moment, it felt good though. Satsuki eventually stands up and leaves

her room, walking via the overpass into the living room and then to the dining hall. Outside is strong wind howling.

"How do I feel so different...?" Ryuko wonders and tries to take a look around... but that is impossible. Somehow, her body moves on her own. Satsuki opens the door to the dining hall. Next to Ragyo is a free chair reserved for Satsuki. Satsuki takes the chair and watches the others. On Satsuki's right are a few confidants of Ragyo, on her left is her mother herself. In front of Satsuki are Hoomaru, Nui, and additional confidants.

"Satsuki. You seem so busy. This academy truly is a large ambition of yours, as it looks like... larger than I expected it to be." Ragyo mentions. Everyone next to Satsuki is a monster. An evil person, all of them have to be punished, they all do not deserve their places in the world! And yet, Satsuki tries to stay calm. Inside her is a storm of wrath. If she could, she'd kill them.

"Am... am I Satsuki?" Ryuko wonders.

"The academy is indeed an ambition I wish to fulfill as good as I can, mother. I simply want to prove myself as useful to your reign."

"I have no doubt you will succeed in that."

"Of course not, mother."

"It is admirable." Ragyo mentions to the others. While the confidants eat calmly, like parasites feasting on the wealth of her family, Satsuki holds back with desire for a good meal. Taking a bite is like a chore around these people. It cannot be enjoyed at all.

"So this is the Kiryuin Manor?"

Hoomaru looks at Nui who prefers to annoy the confidants next to her.

"What are you doing, Nui?"

"Don't annoy me, Hoomaru! You are stupid!" Nui chuckles.

"It's fine, Rei." Ragyo mentions. Hoomaru nods.

"Apologies."

"Well. The power of our organization raises. We have a market share of 77 percent, the groups we still struggle on are mainly teenagers and humans under 35 years. Does any of the gentlemen here have suggestions?" Ragyo asks.

Satsuki blurs the answers away in her head. The confidants look more like bodyguards with their black suits and the blackened glasses. The answers of her mother, her secretary and the blond parasite are deleted off of her head the moment they enter it. Ryuko, who seems to be mentally a part of Satsuki, can feel everything Satsuki feels. There somehow even is the feeling of moving Satsuki directly. Everything Satsuki does is determined by the memory already, but Ryuko feels like she could change it if she'd knew how to.

"Man... being together each day with the people you hate... I have no clue how you did that, Satsuki." Ryuko wonders.

Suddenly, the time speeds up, and the world breaks apart into thousands of white Life Fibers. As Satsuki dissolves herself, Ryuko falls from the black sky in the realm of the Life Fibers, as a Life Fiber Being, hearing wind, screams, battle sounds, the names "Junketsu" and "Bakuzan." The deeper Ryuko falls, the more she realizes all the dead Life Fibers on the ground - all their red colors have blackened out. There's no need to ask how many are dead - the question rather is, how deep this grave like world is. Briefly before Ryuko falls onto the ground, the ground dissolves and Ryuko falls into a white Life Fiber, awakening as Satsuki into a new memory.

Satsuki stands in the room of the Elite four, with her back leaned to her friends, looking out of the window. Sanageyama and Nonon sit

relaxed on pillows, Houka holds his Laptop, Gamagoori has his arms closed, looking proudly at Satsuki.

"Matoi is brave. You have to give her that." Gamagoori mentions.

"Eh, I don't know dude, I'd just remove her from the academy." Nonon answers.

"Realistically, removing Matoi from the academy is an double edged sword. She destroys facilities day for day, on the other hand, she fights her way through her fellow students - effectively dividing the weak from the strong." Houka thinks.

"She'll get her butt whooped. That's all I'm going to say." Sanageyama finishes. Satsuki looks out of the window. The evening today is stormy. Ryuko can read Satsuki's mind and thoughts.

"Kill mother. Avenge your sister. Find peace. Destroy the Life Fibers. Use Matoi. Use your friends. Honour your dead. Stay resolved. Terrorize to win. Destroy REVOCS. Natural selection. Natural selection. Natural selection. Selection. Selection... Selection!"

"Inumuta is right. Matoi destroys everyone who dares to fight her. If she fails, she stands up. She is a useful tool if we do it correctly, all we have to do is prepare this tool." Satsuki answers and turns around. Junketsu looks at Satsuki's friends.

"And what are we supposed to do, Lady Satsuki?" Sanageyama asks.

"Nothing. Watch. When I came back from REVOCS, I had an idea in my mind. Most students of this academy are weaklings, worthless pigs that will be purged sooner or later. They don't deserve their place on this academy and the world - they only seek for stars on a uniform filled by parasites. We'll cull them."

"And how?" Nonon asks.

"A "King of the Hill" battle. We will give them one week of time, in which they have to fight their way up to us. Matoi will win, no doubt about that. And when that happens, she will get stronger. Each fight she experiences strengthens her, bringing us closer to the final goal. We use Matoi as a means to defeat my mother."

"Sounds lit, not gonna lie." the Samurai says.

"It is effective. Tournaments show who is able to survive and who is not. I will not lie: there will be dead people. But this is a sacrifice I gladly take to ensure our victory over REVOCS. Besides... our hands are dirty and full of blood for months. More casualties do not make a difference." Satsuki answers. To Ryuko, Satsuki's hate towards Ragyo is understandable and justified based on what she did and tried to accomplish, but she cannot help but think this hate somehow devoured a part of Satsuki, and here it's quite well shown, showing no mercy to the other humans around her as long as Ragyo falls.

"... oh man, Satsuki, this "King of the Hill" stuff was way too crazy. If I think about it... and she all does that just to avenge me and save the world." Ryuko thinks.

The Elite four nod without saying anything.

"Inumuta, Gamagoori, we have to prepare this operation. Sanageyama, Jakuzure, stay ready until I have orders for you."

"As you wish, Lady Satsuki." Nonon smiles loyal. Nonon and Sanageyama leave the room - Satsuki, Gamagoori and Inumuta follow her to a table. Gamagoori turns on a light - the table is large enough to prepare large scale operations. The tall man rolls out plans of the Honnouji-Academy, and below them are a few hints onto the Ragyo Stadium. Inumuta opens his Laptop. Satsuki seems to wait and think.

"How can you strengthen Matoi?" she wonders as Ryuko notices. When Satsuki starts talking, time starts speeding up once again,

resulting in the world falling apart again. Ryuko once more falls through the dark halls. She notices how Satsuki never once laughs during the memories she can hear - her voice can be heard, Ryuko's, Ragyo's, even her father's voice, but one thing that is noticable is that Satsuki never laughs. With every memory Ryuko lives through, she realizes how far Satsuki goes, all to defeat REVOCS, to kill her mother, punish her henchmen... Ryuko more or less knew all of this, but never thought she would experience these memories. Only a few mere feelings of guilt plague her. Knowingly kill people, terrorising the academy and many other schools and humans all over Japan... all of that just to defeat what she see's as evil. Sudden images appear in Ryuko's head, of Satsuki ordering attacks during the school raids... Gamagoori heartlessly punishing people on Satsuki's order... making Sanageyama try to go beyond his limits, while he is used just a mere tool for Satsuki's ambitions...

Do these actions make Satsuki a bad person? An evil person? Or is she less evil than them?

Ryuko lands on top of a mountain.. A few flowers are here and there. The stone is cold, the temperature even more, the path is difficult to climb. Yet Ryuko, who now appears as a normal human being, tries to reach the very peak of it. The higher she comes, the heavier her body feels like. The wind tries to blow her away. On the peak of it, she can see blood, and various items. Broken scissor blades. Her father's guitar. Nui's bowtie, soaked up with blood. Ragyo's destroyed heart. Skeletons. The sky turned blue... but it looks unhealthy. It shouldn't look like this. Everything here isn't normal.

And then, she finally meets Satsuki, wearing Junketsu in his normal form, looking down at a saved Japan, and holding Bakuzan, proud and full of resolve. Ryuko approaches Satsuki, although it's difficult due to the storm.

"Satsuki!" Ryuko yells. Her big sister turns around.

"You... what did you do... all these things... did you killed people?" Ryuko asks confused.

"Not with my own hands."

"And you feel like that was a good choice?!"

"I would have done everything again to avenge you!"

"But killing people? I... I get that but..."

"Wouldn't you have done the same for me?"

"..."

"I am not the evil one here, sister. The Life Fibers are. They made me do all of these things. That... is why they have to vanish."

"Satsuki..." Ryuko reacts in disbelief. Then, when Ryuko is able to look down onto Japan, she realizes how much industry, how much poverty is there. There is no beauty anymore. Not in Satsuki's vision, from the looks of it. Satsuki can't deny it... as much as she despises Ragyo and as much as she contradicts her in various forms... one belief she shares with her: there are rich, and poor people. Weak, and strong.

"We won, Ryuko." Satsuki says icecold.

"That's not you, Satsuki! The Satsuki I know isn't a cold asshole! You only behaved like this because you didn't had a choice to!"

"You wish to see things that are not real, Ryuko. This... is a part of me. I love you. I love my friends. But this world... the people that live on it... even with the destruction of the primordial Life Fiber, they seek for clothing... and the Life Fiber Sickness is the price for that..."

"Stop, Satsuki! Please!"

"You... seem like you don't want to understand my actions. Even though they were perfectly clear."

"THIS ISN'T YOU!"

"I am more than this, Ryuko. But I am this, too. Buried deep into my personality, until the time comes to unleash it once more." Satsuki answers. Ryuko slaps her face.

"THE FUCK YOU TALKING ABOUT!? YOU AIN'T A HEARTLESS PSYCHO UNLIKE MOM OR NUI!"

"And yet... I do not feel regret in my deeds, as long as they weren't aimed towards you."

"... I can't believe this..." Ryuko mentions desperate. Suddenly, the world slows down for a brief moment, and Hinata's high, but gentle voice is hearable.

"Choose, Matoi. Your sister... shall she keep this personality trait... or shall she not... your choice will affect her... but do you have the strength to sever her from her mind?" Hinata asks curious and continues time as normal. Ryuko's and Satsuki's hair moves through the wind.

The Scissor Blades materialize in Ryuko's hands, Satsuki draws her weapon Bakuzan all of a sudden, but stays in Junketsu's normal form.

"This... isn't you! This is just an illusion!" Ryuko yells and attacks Satsuki in order to sever this cruel personality trait of her big sister. Defeating Satsuki will make Satsuki go unconscious, but she might feel different and better if Ryuko wins. Satsuki hits Ryuko, causing her sister to bleed. Then, Satsuki makes some space and holds her weapon ready.

"You fail to see, Ryuko! You... would kill me?"

"I'm not killing you! I'm just trying to help you, Satsuki! Please! If I can... if I can remove you from this memory, you will never have to feel this way again! There won't be any hate anymore!"

"You should listen to yourself, Ryuko." Satsuki threatens and attacks Ryuko. Ryuko blocks the attack with the scissor blades and slams Satsuki against a rock, yet her big sister avoids being hit by the scissor blades, and finally, she rams Bakuzan into Ryuko's stomach and kicks her sister away, drawing the weapon out of the stomach as Ryuko falls down.

"All the things you saw are real and yet you deny to accept me the way I am. Who are you to JUDGE ME?!" Satsuki yells.

"You damn... bitch..." Ryuko mentions and attacks Satsuki once more with both scissor blades. Satsuki parries the attack and moves Ryuko against a rock, trying to ram Bakuzan into her sister again, misses however and starts bleeding herself as Ryuko hits her sister's stomach. Satsuki falls to the ground, with Junketsu feasting on Satsuki's wound. Satsuko mourns in pain.

"Grrrrraaaaaaw... damn it."

As Ryuko see's the wound, she realizes what she did. Her hands stutter, she lets the scissor blades fall, and then, they break apart.

"S-S-Satsuki?"

"You... really would... destroy me... to help me... do you even know if it really helps me?"

"... I-I'm sorry, I..." Ryuko mumbles and takes a few steps back. Satsuki slowly stands up with wrath in her face and approaches Ryuko.

"I didn't wanted to do this! I just wanted to help you!"

"You'll pay."

"Satsuki, I..." and suddenly, Ryuko falls from the cliff, falling hundreds of meters deep, and the world falls apart, and the sky goes dark, and Ryuko dissolves into a Life Fiber Being... and when she

falls onto the ground, she finds herself back in the Realm of the Life Fibers... and back at the start of this adventure.

Ryuko stands up, looking around. Satsuki's personality was not severed, since she still stands there. It relieves Ryuko to see this. Eventually, Ryuko moves forward.

...

"AAAAAWW THIS IS SOOOO TASTY!" Mataro laughs happily. Mako nods satisfied as well, Sukuyo and Barazo eat calmly, happy about their kids having fun. Maiko on the other hand... simply sits there.

"You clean this up, right?" Maiko asks.

"Uh, sure, haha!" Mataro smiles. Guts smells Maiko's leg and barks happy once. A lot of tasty meals are on the table, made with love by the Mankanshoku's. It smells just as good as it tastes. Croquettes, of course.

"I hope so. You aren't safe here, buuuuuut we will visit Ryuko's manor."

"WHAT, REALLY!?" Mataro asks surprised. Maiko nods.

"SHE MUST HAVE A REALLY REALLY BIG HOUSE!"

"Oh she does, I was part of the building process." Maiko grins and cleans her glasses. Mako smiles slightly.

"I hope she's doing alright." Mako mumbles hopeful and looks around. There is a plate with food but the person who should eat it isn't here. Nui hasn't come to dinner, yet the others don't really mind... everyone is probably glad she isn't here. Mako thinks different.

"Mama? I have to go up briefly." Mako smiles and stands up.

"But you aren't done with your food yet!"

"I know, but uhm... look." Mako says and points her finger at Nui's meal. Sukuyo looks to Nui's meal. She does feel uncomfortable, knowing Mako's intention.

"... maybe you want to leave her alone." Sukuyo suggests. Barazo and the others talk and therefore don't notice the convo.

"But she must be lonely."

"Of course, Mako. But... don't forget... she, she wanted to hurt you. I don't want anything to happen to you. And I don't know how this young woman is like if you are alone."

"I know, Mama. I will just give her the meal and then I'll come back, okay?"

"... alright."

"Thanks." Mako smiles and grabs Nui's plate with croquettes. Walking up the stairs and reaching the first floor, Mako notices how old and broke the entire house actually is. Eventually, Mako carefully approaches the door to Nui's room. It's quiet in there. Peeking through it, she can see a mirror. Opening the door a bit more, she can see Nui sitting on a comfortable chair next to the window, crocheting Life Fibers slowly, with a neutral... well... maybe very slightly sad face expression. Nui looks at Mako as she notices the door opening.

"What do you want?" Nui asks.

"... uhm... we made dinner and I wanted to give you your food... if you don't mind."

"I'm not hungry." Nui answers.

"Are you sure. You probably haven't eaten anything in a while."

"I don't need much to eat."

"My mum makes really really tasty croquettes, look!" Mako smiles.
Nui takes a very brief look and then looks up to Mako again.

"Tempura. Is it fish?"

"... I... I can't tell you that but... y-yes... there is some fish in it... it's really tasty, do you want to try it out?"

"No."

"If you only like fish, we can make you a few yummy croquettes with fish in them, I'm sure you will like them!" Mako smiles.

"No."

Mako sighs.

"... okay. Do you want to come down and talk with us a bit? We want to play a little game when we are done eating. Maybe we have some time before we go to Ryuko's place."

"I don't want anything to do with you."

"Oh... but why?"

"... you won't understand it anyway." Nui answers and looks back onto the Life Fibers she's crocheting.

"Are you sure? Ryuko never felt understood either but when she opened up to us she was really really happy about it."

"But I'm not Ryuko, sweetheart."

"... but you remind me of her a bit."

"Pff."

"Did... something happen to you? Is... that why you dislike me and the others?"

"Like you would care."

"I... will let you alone but please... if something is up, you can tell me. I'm not... angry at you or anything when you tried to hurt me... I really am not. I just want people to be happy." Mako continues. Nui puts the Life Fibers onto the window bench and turns to Mako.

"... are... are you maybe sad? Did someone hurt you?" Mako asks careful. Nui starts singing in Life Fiber language briefly.

" * incomprehensible* "

"... uhm... what does that mean?" she asks. Suddenly, Nui rips out her heart. Blood leaves her mouth, but she doesn't feel pain, and the wound doesn't look as bad as years ago when she did it. Mako carefully takes a look at it.

There is but a tiny little light inside it. The heart itself... looks shattered - broken apart. Then, Nui carefully puts it back into her stomach.

"Humans... are humans... and clothing... stays clothing."

"I..."

"You should leave the parasite alone before it feasts on you too." Nui answers and turns the chair around, looking outside and therefore showing her back to Mako.

"... okay. I'm sorry." Mako answers and leaves the room. Nui watches the snow fall outside. She can see her face in the reflection... and grabs her heart out again, looking at it. It's pulsating only very slowly.

She could crush and end all of it now. Simply... disappear. No one will care. That's good.

Maybe she should. Then she bites her teeth together and closes her eyes.

"... I'm too scared..." she mumbles painful and puts it back...

...

Ryuko continues to walk through the halls, approaching the next white Life Fiber... and the closer she comes, the stranger the temperature around it turns. Somehow it's warm and welcoming around the Fiber... not hot, simply normal.

Then she can see a Silhouette inside the white Life Fiber. There are thousands of reflections in various forms and angles, pointing onto one person in the scene. Sparks are visible.

And a man with a scientist coat and red, long hair, who looks to Ryuko. She can read his name card.

"Soichiro... Kiryuin?"

Suddenly, Ryuko dissolves, and the hall does as well...

AN: As usual, leave a review if you like to, I'm always happy for feedback! :) See ya soon with Chapter 21 where Ryuko will experience some of her father's memories! It'll be a reunion Ryuko probably never expected to live through! Stay safe, everyone! :)

If Only You Had Thorns Like A Thistle

AN: This is one of those chapters where I really wish I could embed links and drawings into it. I made so many drawings and uploaded so many tracks for it, it's crazy. It's the longest chapter of the entire story! Wattpad people will be able to read everything with the drawings and stuff, but well, I am still happy you guys are here.

Prepare for some really really interesting and cool stuff today. And get yourself some snacks. Ryuko will go on a journey through her dad's past. And I can tell you it's gonna be an exciting one. Have fun reading... and let me know what you think. I think the stuff you will read will be most certainly one could discuss or be... surprised of. ;)

Tokyo in 2001. It's evening already, and it's raining. Wind is howling - in general, today, the weather seems rather bad. People expect the next train.

"JR Central 2382: Nagoya, Tech Districts, to Tokyo, Hayabusa-Districts - Arrival: one minute. Next stop: Tokyo, Kiryuin Fashion-Districts - Department: five minutes. Please approach once the train has stopped."

More people join the wait. A lot of them are workers and students that now have finished their day. Today is Friday too, and with that, the weekend has arrive. Between all the people that are waiting for their trains, a young man with a rain coat and a hood, brown hair, blue eyes and a calm but concentrated face stands there. He has a normal body appearance, seems however slightly taller than other men in his age and at the station, about 1,92 Meters.

Next to him is also a young woman in about the same age. Both seem to be around twenty years old. The woman wears a red, noble and well protecting coat. Her hair is, untypical for her age, already grey, although they do give away a certain charme in combination

with her red eyes and the distinct light smile. She's holding up an umbrella.

On her coat is the sign of the Kiryuin-Corp logo - a square with white borders, light blue inner colour, and a K on the upper right corner that is connected with an C in the lower right one. As the train arrives, the man and the woman, who both also carry bags with them, enter the train. Outside, it was cold, loud and dirty, inside the train however comfortable, with nice, warm colours and modern interior. Both friends walk up the stairs to get to the upper part of the waggon and then claim a seat for four people for themselves. The waggon is slightly filled, there's still plenty of room for everyone anyway. More and more people enter the train. The woman puts her umbrella into the bag, the man removes his rain coat and chuckles as he looks at her.

"I mean... I offered you the umbrella." the woman mentions as she musters her friends soaked hair.

"Who would have known it would rain this much?" he grins.

"I also offered a pickup via the limousine."

"Of course, but honestly... isn't travelling with the train much more relaxed if romantic?"

"Depends on who you are travelling with."

"Am I good enough?" he smiles. The woman grins and shakes her head.

"You and your answers, Soichiro."

"Gotta entertain Miss Ragyo Kiryuin, second most powerful woman of the Fashion industry, after all. Besides, the train was a good idea - I like this feeling of entering a train or a bus when the day was bad. Feels like you'd find a safe space for a moment."

"Oh, yes, I can see what you mean. Although I still prefer a smiling sun."

"Most people do. I rather have it cloudy though. Keeps me concentrated, instead of thinking "Soichi, you should go outside and sun yourself." But I'm not like that."

"Me neither, if I'm being honest." he answers and puts out a small little note book.

"I'm still asking myself however how these Nexus Fibers, or Banshis, work. They must be more than "shining Fibers."

"Nexus Fibers must be more than that, indeed - my mother unfortunately still hasn't allowed me access to the science labs in the underground parts of our Kiryuin-Tower. I'd knew more by now if this wouldn't be the case."

"She probably hides something, Ragyo."

"Most certainly. I'll find a way in. Whatever she and her researchers found, it must have changed the fashion world drastically and I want to know, why - one could use that for their own advantage."

"We'll keep that advantage for ourselves."

"Of course we do, Soichiro. Kiryuin-Corp gains most of it's money to it's unique clothing - a lot of corporations tried to copy us, but our clothes are not to be copied. They might look the same, but they will never feel like ours."

"No doubt about that."

"Yes." Ragyo answers and looks at the clock. It's 6:22 PM. The younger Ragyo looks much more kinder and friendlier than the one Ryuko met. She actually seems like a person you can get along with now. Outside, transporters with soldiers drive around to the port of Tokyo. Ragyo sighs annoyed, Soichiro takes a look outside as well.

"This world is dying." Soichiro mentions.

"Mhm."

"I'm still grateful your mother and brother offered me a place at Kiryuin-Corp - otherwise I'd be somewhere in America, fighting for my life."

"Yes, I know. This war has been going on for ten years now. Life Fibers were a blessing and a curse at the same time - people fawn over clothes. Imagine this. It's ridiculous. World nations like the German Großreich or entire corporations such as Aether Corp don't do anything else than fawn for them. It's concerning. At the same time, it makes me wonder if there is more to Life Fibers again."

"I'm just glad there weren't any nuclear strikes yet."

"Me too, but... how shall all of this go on in a world without a point to live for? More and more people die without any reason, instead of aiming on useful things, such as science, industry..."

"I know. I feel the same. Hence why we both search for opportunities to use Life Fibers for more than just clothing."

"Of course, Soichiro." Ragyo smiles. Soichiro puts down his note book again, then he puts both his hands onto the table.

"Got an idea what we shall eat this evening, my Lady?" Soichiro asks curious.

"My brother convinced my mother of renovating the Dining Hall in the Tower. The workers there do everything, and they do it fast. Ever ate greek meals?"

"No, I did not yet, but it sounds interesting."

"Good. They are not for everyone, most people here rather keep their stomachs filled with fish and light food, but Life is too short and too amazing on it's own funny ways to not try out new meals." Ragyo

answers and notices how Soichiro just stares into her eyes. Ragyo looks back.

They just continue.

Then Ragyo and Soichiro start laughing.

"Stop staring at me like this, you idiot!" she grins.

"You stared back, you are just as much of an idiot like I am!" he reacts laughing.

"... heh, Soichi, really."

"Ain't my fault you happened to visit the same school like me years ago."

"I'm glad I did." Ragyo answers cheerful.

"Is this... am I dad?" Ryuko wonders who can now live through her fathers memories. Soichiro feels entirely different than Satsuki, especially his emotions and thoughts are out of this world, compared with Satsuki's. The ones of her sister were full of hate and wrath, whileas Soichiro's feelings are warm. Love, a feeling of friendship and trust, being together, and still, there is space for knowledge and studies. Studies about the Life Fibers. Can they feel like humans? Can they be human? What are they? Where did they come from, and much much more questions Soichiro wants to have answered. Ragyo's gaze looks not piercing, but soft, gentle, and kind. Even the way she talks is much more comfortable to listen to.

What would have happened if the Life Fiber research never came this far? Would Ryuko and Satsuki have come to this world anyway? Would their parents have been normal? Parents who knew what it meant to love, like they seem to do now? Staying together, talking with each other, making jokes, knowing you for years, always supporting the other one... a bond that cannot be broken.

Ryuko however is especially curious how the world looked like before her birth. Tokyo looks different now. In 2030, no one wants to live there. In 2001, everything looks so modern, with Neon colours in red, blue, green and purple, advertisement monitors, some of hostile corporations, many of them though owned by Kiryuin-Corp. Everything looks... like a normal life.

Suddenly, Ryuko experiences the time distorting. Instead of the world falling apart, it at first goes faster and then blurs out. Fire appears around Ryuko, sparks fly up, as Ragyo, Soichiro and the world are devoured, and as the fire comes closer, Ryuko notices Life Fibers inside it. When the Life Fiber Fires are about two meter away from Ryuko, the alien like Beings jump onto the young woman and drag it into the ground, and all of a sudden, she is back in Soichiro's body.

Ragyo and Soichiro are in the dining hall of the Corp-HQ. They seem to joke around a bit. The large table is full of tasty meals, and only the plates are left. A young man with normal, long black hair, a thin body, Corp clothes and an relaxed smile enters the room, putting two plates onto the table.

"Do Miss Ragyo and her future husband wish more?" the man grins.

"I thank you for your excellent work, dear Haruki, but you can go now." Ragyo chuckles. Haruki, who seems to be her younger brother, nods once and then pats her sister's shoulder once. His voice is slightly higher than the one of most men and has an innocent nature. Ryuko notices Ragyo seems to feel comfortable around him. The young brother who is about two to three years younger than his big sister walks next to Soichiro.

"Can't wait to start working with you here this year." he smiles as he looks to Soichiro.

"I can't wait either, honestly. I'm curious to see how you and the people here at the corporation handle Life Fibers." Ryuko's dad smiles confident.

"Heh, you'll like it, it's awesome. Catch you later, friend." Haruki says and leaves the dining hall. Ragyo and Soichiro begin their assault on their dinner - well cooked food with many variations. Ragyo's brother has, next to his interest in Life Fiber work, from the looks of it interest in cooking. As the evening goes on and the rain at the windows slam on, Ryuko's future parents talk more about the world and the Life Fibers.

"..."

"It's gonna be interesting to see what I can do with the Nexus Fibers. I think once I start working at the Corp, the Nexus Fibers will be my first project."

"Do you think they possess a key to things larger than us?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, apologies, my literary spirit is trying to get out of me again. I'm just thinking of... topics one could imagine to be impossible. Immortality. Tricking out the death. And so on."

"Have you read Frankenstein recently?" Soichiro asks smiling. Ragyo chuckles briefly.

"Ahem, nothing against Frankenstein, my dear. Miss Shelley wrote a milestone with her work. But... I suppose I'm just thinking what may work and what not."

"Yeah I know. I mean... I wouldn't deny the possibility. If I learned one thing during all my studies and researches on the world then that the craziest things can happen... hence why I always write down my thoughts into my little notebook. In any case... I'd focus first on finding out how flexible Life Fibers can be. I deny to believe they are pure clothing. We know they can move on their own under certain circumstances, so they must be some kind of organism."

"Yes."

"... you think they can feel? Or think?"

"We will find that out, Soichi."

"Mhm. I just can't wait for it." he chuckles.

"I noticed that. But yes, I can't wait for it either.... did your parents tried to contact you again? It's been six months now." Ragyo mentions worried. Soichiro shakes his head.

"I believe that when they heard I'd "work with you", they've let all hopes drive away into their only son." he answers. Ragyo nods slowly and moves her chair to Soichiro as she notices his mood slightly getting worse. She cheers him up by getting close and slowly moving her hand through his hair.

"Apologies. I didn't want to make you feel bad."

"... ah, it's alright. I mean... it's not like they ever thought high of me anyway. "Our Soichi will never make it in Life." "He should study something properly!" "This crazy Kiryuin bride makes him obsessed over clothing!"

"They just don't know what they are talking about, Soichi. Wait for it. In ten years we will lead a rich and wealthy company that will change the world for the better. It'll be good. You'll see - your parents will be impressed. Remember: my mother is like your parents. She doesn't care, everything I do is wrong.... I wish father would be still here. Since he is gone, having her company got much worse."

Soichiro nods and hugs Ragyo. They both continue to eat a bit more. Ryuko notices how warm he feels around his heart the longer he stays with Ragyo. He really feels comfortable having her with him.

"Mom is really different. So much more friendly. She can't pretend this."

After finishing dinner, a few waiters appear and clean up everything. They also clean up the table.

Then, the world blurs out in time again. Ragyo, Soichiro and the rest dissolve, and fire appears once more that slowly approaches Ryuko. However, she can hear voices now - those of her parents. Like brief lightnings, images appear, of her parents having a good time, studying together or doing other wholesome activities.

"Cotton candy?" Soichiro smiles.

"An offer I will not refuse." Ragyo reacts happily and takes a finger full of it.

...

A new image. Ragyo and Soichiro both study Life Fibers in the Nagoya university.

"... and the Nexus Fibers are responsible for keeping the structure inside their objects up. All Life Fiber based clothes need at least one Nexus Fiber." he writes down onto his notebook. Ragyo moves a drawing to him on which the basic functions of the Nexus Fibers are visible.

"Oh, good work! We should copy the drawing and put it into our folders. We need to keep everything important."

"Let me do that."

...

Another memory. Ragyo and Soichiro sit together on a couch, cuddling together while watching a movie.

"Did you noticed we only ever watch Horror movies?" Soichiro grins. Ragyo rolls her eyes and grins.

"They're the only movies that make you wanna cuddle. Mind you, you told me you are not afraid of monsters." she chuckles.

"I only pretend to be scared."

"Yeah, of course, of course, I'm the one who should be afraid, yes? Oh Soichi, you lovely fool."

"We could watch comedy sometime."

"God forbid, no!"

"Knew that scares you!"

...

As the fire burns out, Ryuko falls another time into the ground, finding herself back into her father's body. It's spring. Ragyo and Soichiro sit in the garden of the large Kiryuin manor. The flowers are beautiful and smell well. In the distance, the trees slowly blossom up. It's so calm. So idyllic. Both enjoy their time on a cozy bench, and water from a large well flows. They simply let their minds drive away to the comfortable surroundings. The view from here to the forest of Nagoya is breathtaking.

Soichiro looks at his girlfriend. She seems to be dreaming.

"What are you dreaming about?" Soichiro asks.

"I'm... just dreaming about the future. About this manor. About our home. I... I am afraid."

"Of what?"

"... my family built up so much. I have to carry a weight I am not sure of holding it up. I'm not sure if I am strong enough for the future challenges. I love this place, Soichiro. Here, in this garden, everything is quiet... I often go here. But outside the garden, outside this manor... the world is a cruel and dark place. I... I simply don't

want to die out there. Not alone." she explains with a heavy heart, that is clear. Soichiro comes closer to her. Both look at the well and the beautiful flowers.

"I want to make something out of our lives. We know each other for eight years. We often jested around, made jokes, did our homework together, visited cinemas, studied Life Fibers... but I want to change this world. I fear I could lose myself in that wish. I... really don't want to die there."

"Ragyo..."

"I'll be the new CEO of Kiryuin-Corp. This position... is one of the most powerful in the entire world. Even governments will obey me, if I do everything correct. I don't want to die as a CEO. I want a family... and I want to sit here in twenty years, seeing my children grow up here. Making sure that the world is, at least for them, a safe place. It shall not be a cruel place, but beautiful. If humans would wear the same clothes... they'd all made out of the same... there wouldn't be class conflicts."

Soichiro nods understanding and hugs his friend.

"... Mom..." Ryuko mumbles. Hearing these words hurt.

"... but I... I gave you the choice... to just come with me. Why did you do that...?"

"Apologies. I... fear I am thinking too much again."

"I know. It's alright. I often ask myself the same. People kill each other day for day, but all of this will have an end some day. This corporation has such a huge grip on this world, we can do something with it. We could make something good out of this world. It'll just take a lot of patience and a few good plans."

"Yes." Ragyo answers hopeful. Suddenly, the doors to the garden open. The lovely-melancholic vibe breaks, and pure seriousness

risers.

A rather tall woman with long hair and a neutral gaze enters the garden. She wears slightly dark blue clothes with angel like feathers on her back. Her skin is pure, her blue eyes clear, and she has light blue hair that waves up behind her feathers. Two Corp-guards wait at the entrance.

"Mother!" Ragyo reacts loud, obeying and loyal, and stands up. Soichiro stands up slowly as well. Ragyo's mother walks pass her daughter first, not granting her a single gaze, but she does look at Soichiro.

"Miss Kiryuin... greetings." he says. The ice cold mother musters the young man. She does this every time he visits the manor. It's absolutely clear with how much distrust and distance she seems to approach every situation.

"Soichiro." Ragyo's mother answers. The woman who's true name is Izumi, is a cold, calculating personality. Her voice, although gentle and warm, spreads only more coldness, thanks to the way she talks. She does not need a lot of words to get what she wants, and to make sure people listen to her. Ryuko notices how Soichiro feels somewhat in danger, or at least extremely uncomfortable whenever the woman that is taller than him or Ragyo appears. His heart is pumping slightly faster than usual. Izumi must be a paradox, nearly not understandable person, as Ryuko thinks.

"Mother, please apologize my sudden arrival, my Soichiro and I, we had a long journey. The university in Nagoya is closed for now, and we wanted to visit the manor for a while. I should have called you personally and not trust my brother with this task. Forgive my mistake." Ragyo explains. Soichiro appears quiet and calm. Izumi looks over to her daughter with a strict gaze.

"Were your studies successful?" she asks.

"We did found some exciting..."

"I asked for you. Not your friend."

"... yes, they were." Ragyo answers and looks down, intimidated by her mother. Soichiro does not react at all. It's better to keep your mouth shut in a situation like this.

"Men. Sent Soichiro into the manor."

"Soichi..." Ragyo mumbles.

"It's okay." Soichiro reacts and hugs Ragyo, then he leaves the garden with the guards.

"Oh no, damn it, I want to know what Ragyo and her mom are talking about! Turn around dad!" Ryuko thinks loud. But her father of course cannot hear her and enters the manor. Everything looks so noble and high quality. Soichiro is sent into his room. Thousands of notes and papers lie around on the desks and his bed, there is also a microscope with a single Life Fiber, as well as models of Life Fiber sequences that look a bit like DNA, if only very very distant. Soichiro is just as obsessed about Life Fibers like his wife.

"Wow..." Ryuko mumbles impressed. Soichiro continues to work, Ragyo does not come back apparently. It must be something important. The longer Soichiro works, the more he writes down into his large notebook, and then, the world blurs away again.

The white Life Fibers in the dark halls start burning as Ryuko's body prepares for the next memory. Screams are audible, the sound of exploding flesh, then, a car, and a storm, and finally, thousands of Life Fibers fly with high speed at Ryuko, missing her by a few centimeters. She eventually falls back into the dark ground and lands into Soichiro, who's sitting in his car, driving up the mountains to the Kiryuin manor.

The young man is under huge stress, drives without caution through the streets next to the cliffs, arriving at the manor. Thankfully, the gates to it are open. With full speed, he drives into the main part of

the manor and leaves the car. The door is open, and blood is in the main hall. With a shocked heart he runs into the room.

"HELLO!?" he screams worried.

"RAGYO!?" Soichiro continues to yell and hears her whimpering.

"Ragyo." he realizes and runs to the living room... where he can see his wife shaking and shocked on the ground, full of blood, and her dead brother in front of her. His wounds are horrible to look at, and his head is open.

"Oh no, no, no, no..." he mumbles and walks towards his girlfriend to cheer her up.

"... that... that... Soi... Soichi... I.."

"... shh, I'm here, it's okay."

"... mother... and my brother... they... they wanted to... kill me, they..."

"... you defended yourself."

"... what did they do to me...?"

"Your skin..."

"... they burned my back, and they tried to suck my blood with Life Fibers... Soichi..." she mumbles scared. Soichiro hugs her. Her shaking slowly disappears.

"... it's gonna be okay."

"... yes."

Ryuko tries to somehow manipulate the room. There must be a way to leave Soichiro's body. The more she thinks about it, the more she actually gets the feeling she can do that... and indeed she does. She

falls out of him and onto the ground, however, she stays transparent for him - the memory cannot be altered apparently. Interestingly, she wears a REVOCS scientist coat as she takes a look in the middle of the room.

"... oh damn." she mumbles and looks at Ragyo's dead brother. He received a seriously deep and bloody wound on his head, and apparently, tears left his eyes. Ragyo sunk her head into Soichiro's arms, therefore, Ryuko cannot see her face. She must be completely devastated. Her clothes are destroyed too. Her mother and brother must have mistreated her or something. Whatever happened here was immensely horrible, and when Ryuko looks at Ragyo's open back, she can see the stars on it. Blood still leaves them.

Suddenly, Ryuko is sucked into Soichiro again and the memory dissolves anew...

...

"WE HAVE ARRRRRRIIIIVED AT OOOOOOUR DESTINATIONNN!" Maiko yells. The back doors of Maiko's REVOCS tank are opened up, and the Mankanshokus leave it. Nui stays hesitant. Slowly the Mankanshoku's walk around the tank and approach the Matoi mansion. It looks exactly as it was weeks ago when Ryuko was here. The entrance however is full of snow. To enter the building, the family starts digging up the path and entrance - after all, they don't know the window front on the other side of the mansion is destroyed. Maiko climbs out of her tank and looks around as well.

"Miss Couturier, we have arrived, please leave the tank before it explodes on it's own! Not that THAT would happen!" Maiko yells into the tank and knocks two times on the hatch, then she walks down the path as well.

Eventually, Nui leaves the tank with her weapon and takes a look around. Snow is everywhere on the ground. Mako and the others shoveled a way into the mansion, as well as making at least a slightly clear path. Maiko also enters the building swiftly. Nui

however stays away from it, only walking slowly on the pathways, with small steps, to suck up the atmosphere and the... memories of this place. The snow makes it a bit harder to walk around and see objects. The closer she comes to the building, the clearer the objects around it become however, such as bushes, or flowers. The walls of the building are rather blue, with strong stones, and windows. At least four in the upper floor, and two on the left and right side in the lower part of the building. There are also balconies from the looks of it. This Matoi Mansion looks totally different than the one Nui visited years ago.

The snow covers most parts of the mansion - including a hill with an interesting seeming object on it. The hill is also connected to the path. Curiously, Nui approaches the hill and removes some of the snow, revealing a gravestone. Removing more snow reveals the name on it.

"Isshin Matoi." she reads quiet and removes the last rest of the snow. There is a completely frozen flower. It seems to be a thistle from the looks of it. A lot of those appear to be growing around the manor as she notices briefly after. Nui looks up to the manor's windows. The first lights go on, and she can hear Mako and Mataro quietly.

There is also some kind of fire apparently - which is strange since it always makes a sound whenever a light goes on. Maybe she is hallucinating? In any case, Nui puts down the flower again and moves to the manor, cleaning her pink cute shoes from the snow and the arriving in the entrance hall. She does notice it's warm her, but these temperatures don't increase the warmth of her body - she stays cold as usual. She can hear steps above her. The entrance hall has warm, comfortable brown colours and a carpet, and still, Nui feels like something is off.

"This is so awesome! Ryuko really has a cool house!" she can hear Mataro laugh in the upper floor. Maiko is in the living room, slamming some wooden planks onto the broken window front - she must have gotten these planks from the basement under the stairs next to Nui.

Barazo and Sukuyo shovel away more of the snow that is inside the living room. Guts licks it away.

The living room is, apart from the snow and the windows, inviting and comfortable as well, and still, Nui can't get rid of the feeling there is danger here. She can't even get rid of the sound of the fire.

"Can you hear the fire too?" Nui asks the three. Maiko, Barazo and Sukuyo shake their head.

"What fire?" Sukuyo asks.

"Something's burning."

"Is there a chimney?" Barazo asks Maiko and Sukuyo.

"Yup, but that one is obviously out." Maiko answers.

"Well you may be just imagining it, dear." Sukuyo smiles and continues. Nui shakes her head annoyed.

"I ain't your dear." Nui answers insulted and continues to scan the manor for danger. There is an open door in the living room, which she goes through.

It seems like this is Ryuko's room, as Nui notices fast. The first thing that falls into her eyes is a picture of Ryuko and Satsuki on the desk next to the bed, and an alarm, which is off however. Nui takes a look at the image. There is something written on it.

"Best sister of all time. Miyazaki, 2027." Nui reads quiet. The picture shows Ryuko and Satsuki visiting a zoo, with both of them having happy faces and comfortable clothes, and the zoo looks very inviting and sweet too, with lots of animals to pet. Even though the Life Fiber Sickness haunted them at this point, they still were able to have good times. Nui puts the picture down again and looks at the bed. It seems comfortable. On a small desk is a folder with documents and application templates written by Houka Inumuta and Satsuki. It

seems like that was necessary, as Nui quickly sees an attempt of an own application Ryuko wrote. In a rather impatient and unprofessional font, it's written she "would be down for the job." Nui pinches her eyes. There also seems to be a small additional folder with more pictures of Ryuko and Satsuki. Nui turns the pages around for a while. They look so happy. They look like they genuinely had fun.

"... did she ever thought of me too?" Nui wonders pining and takes another look around. But no matter what she examines... there is only Ryuko and Satsuki. No Nui. As if she never existed. She simply nods, hardly accepting the fact and moves on. The living room seems repaired thanks to Maiko now, and the gap Ichiro caused in the window wall is fixed, if only more or less. The engineer went onto the couch, grinning happily at the manor's interior which she worked on. Sukuyo and Barazo look around for cookies or other tasty little things to snack during this cold evening, and Guts tries strangely enough to throw wood into the chimney by biting it and then throwing the wood into it. Even if he looks helpless, after all, he is a dog, he comes surprisingly far with his task. Except of making a fire of course.

"Mind if I ask how we can call you?" Sukuyo asks Nui.

"... does that play a role?"

"I'm sure you'd want to be called the way you want to, or not?" the mother asks.

"... I don't care. Nui. Grand Couturier. Psychopath. Parasite. Clothing. Whatever you think fits me the most. It's all the same anyway." Nui answers.

"... alright." Sukuyo reacts and decides to not bother any longer. Nui leaves the living room and enters the basement. There is a light on, so Maiko was indeed in there. She's trying to be careful when walking down the stairs. Interestingly, everything looks the same still. At least the walls do. Cold and full of bricks. Other than that, the

basement is empty. Just wood to burn, a few desks years ago, a few dead Life Fibers, blue prints, empty portraits... and blood?

As Nui takes a closer look at the blood, she finds out it was actually just water? Especially when she touches it and realizes that she cannot suck it up with her finger. In addition to that, a slight head ache haunts her, and the sound of fire is back too. Then, as Nui turns around, one of the portraits fell down.

Picking it up reveals an image of Nui, smiling, with her left eye covered by her blonde hair, and blood flowing her face down... and her neck.

"... what is going on here...?" she mumbles and puts the portrait down again. This must be a joke. Someone had to know she would come over here. It can't be different. Ichiro must know. How else should this image appear here?

She isn't driving insane, or experiencing a trauma. Or?

Is she going insane?

...

Steps. Nui looks up the stairs. Nui grabs her gun and walks up. A blade scratches the ground, or at least that's what she can hear. In distrust, Nui aims with her rifle and slowly enters the entrance again, but it's only Mataro walking around. Sukuyo notices how she walks pass Mataro with her weapon.

"What is up with her?" Sukuyo asks worried.

"With who? That psycho parasite girl?" Maiko grins.

"She's just walking around with her weapon."

"She's gotta know it. I ain't gonna ask her." Maiko answers and looks around the TV channels. Nui walks up the stairs into the upper

mansion. The lights flicker, and steps are audible - that seems to be Mako then.

"Hey, annoying lil friend of Ryuko? Where are you?" Nui yells. No answer. Nui rolls her eyes annoyed and takes a look around. She finds two large doors on the left side of the stairs. On the left side are more rooms from the looks of it. The doors on the right side definitely lead into the library... and another room Nui however doesn't know anything about. It looks like a museum however as she enters it. The light is out in here.

Inside the room are items possessed by either Ryuko, Satsuki, or the deceased Isshin Matoi.

The snow slams on the windows of the museum room. Nui looks for a light switch but in the darkness, it's hard to find one. The only light the room receives is the one from the moon, shining into it. Taking a closer look at the room reveals models of Life Fibers, sketches he or maybe Ragyo drew... and an interesting looking notebook on a small table with Soichiro's name on it. The notes seem to begin in around the year 2000 - Izumi died 2002. So this seems to be before Ragyo got attacked by her family members.

Nui takes a look at one of the many pages. The notebook is full of interesting content from the looks of it. This note was taken in the late part of 2002.

"Ragyo and I developed a few interesting theories regarding the Nexus Fibers. Nexus Fibers seem to be able to create movements for the surrounding Fibers. The right amount of Nexus Fibers, the exact composition and the careful tailoring of the object's structure are required to let the Nexus Fibers perform tasks.

In short: these Nexus Fibers could act as "muscles" or "bones" just like the bones of us humans. Testing these theories will take a few years, but they could, if successful, open up many interesting opportunities in working with Life Fibers."

Nui turns to another page. This one was written in 2005.

"Today's the third anniversary of Izumi Kiryuin's death. Ragyo seems like she got well over the loss. I still wonder what made Izumi and Haruki attack Ragyo. My attempt of restoring Ragyo's natural skin colour has failed, but my wife seems to take the loss well too. And besides, she always had a slight genetical issue - her grey hair with 14, specifically. Our REVOCS corporation makes great progress since we know more about the Nexus Fibers. Whatever Izumi did must have shocked Ragyo so much she actually was able to draw new conclusions to our red little friends."

Another note. From the year 2007.

"Ragyo... asked me today... if I considered making children with her. Facing our upcoming tasks of improving the work with Life Fibers, this is a wish I am not sure whether we have time for or not. But it was always a dream for both of us. She... did had a strange consideration however - she mentioned whether it would work infusing a child with Life Fibers to genetically change it entirely. I don't know what made her come up with this idea, or what could happen in such an experiment. The kid might die. Life Fibers suck blood, hence why Ragyo's skin is bleak. Maybe we should try it with an actual Life Fiber... and not with an innocent child. Then again, I have no clue on how we should approach this challenge. We might need several subjects for a task like this.

I don't know."

Nui closes the book and grabs it. A large part of these notes seem to be interesting, and there are still over 130 pages to go. Soichiro must have had interesting thoughts and if Nui is already here, she can at least read what kind of person she killed years ago. Still, she continues walking around the room. There is a wall full of photographies of Ryuko and Satsuki, and even some with Mako. On these images, Nui can see the women have a lot of fun, they apparently do selfies - Satsuki looks seriously embarassed in these.

Other images include them visiting parks, travelling through Japan and more.

So much fun. So much free time. So much carelessness. She never had that. The hardest part in all of this is however the cold fact Ryuko and Satsuki never once "wasted" a single thought on her. Can she blame them? Certainly not.

But it leaves another large scar in her already shattered heart. And that is well visible inside the psychopath's eyes, even with her mental conditions Ragyo caused. No matter how ice cold and insane Nui became - it seems like behind all the Nexus Fibers that keep her body together, there is a living Being, that, with every step it walks through the mansion, with every heart beat it does since it's return to the world, turns sadder, lonelier... and more depressed, asking itself the question:

"Should I have ever existed at all? Am I worth the air I am still breathing?"

Nui continues to walk on, dejected and in a sad mood, something you'd never expect from her to see - then again, no one can see her, so why pretend anything? She notices another image with Isshin and Ryuko when she was a little child, around six years, although Isshin looks at the viewer with a grim gaze, and Ryuko being intimidated. Nui leaves the room and enters the library. The lights here are out. Steps are audible again.

"Hello?" Nui asks worried. No one answers. Is she hallucinating again? Books are everywhere and entire shelves full of works - Agrippa, Shelley, Orwell, Nietzsche, Goethe and more. Isshin seems like he was interested in reading, just like his wife. Interestingly, everything has been restored. Objects such as Isshin's notebook were most probably hidden in the basement when the mansion went up in flames after Nui's bomb. Ryuko was never interested in what Isshin wrote inside that book.

More steps are audible, and fire.

"Hey!" Nui yells and walks towards the window, as there seemed to be a shadow moving. Was that Mako? Probably not, why would she hide in the dark? Is she starting to go insane? What is going on here?

"... all right, you little brat, you're getting on my nerves and I hate it when people get on my nerves..." Nui threatens evil. And suddenly, the door to the room slams, and is closed.

"HEY!" she yells. Suddenly, the windows explode, shards fly around, Nui jumps up and fires through the window, but no one is there! Shelves fall, her entire sight blurs and gets distorted, her perception experiences disturbances in form of red and orange colours that flicker up in her eyes, changing the entire colour palette of the room, turning it into a hellish nightmare, steps are audible and become louder and louder, as if someone would start running! Blades are hearable, fire is hearable, smoke arises...

"AH WHAT IS THIS!?" she screams angry and tries to leave the room, but the door is closed. She wouldn't care about dying but this is completely different, something is wrong with this manor, this is clear! Nui aims helplessly into the area, bites her teeth together, then suddenly, she feels like she is getting stabbed a thousand times into her shoulder, can hear the sound of a sharp measuring tape, Isshin's voice, then Nui falls onto the ground as her headaches grow stronger. She loses her Fiber rifle, and as she looks up, it all of a sudden turned into a purple Scissor blade! As she tries to reach her weapon, she turns her head up and notices how her vision flickers once more, and after the next eye blink she does, she can see herself in front of the dying Isshin, and the world has turned time back into the year 2025. Nui falls back.

"What is this!?"

"Haha. I'm so nice, aren't I?" the Nui at the window smiles happily. She can hear steps behind the door next to her.

"Wai... wait I know this, Ry-Ryuk... OH GOD DON'T OPEN THE DOOR!" Nui screams and tries to keep the door closed but is slammed away as it opens up, seeing Ryuko in front of her, looking at the Nui at the window. The Nui from 2025 looks at the door, then, Isshin grabs the scissor blade in his stomach and precisely cuts out Nui's left eye with one quick slash.

Her left eye socket starts bleeding like hell, first, the one from 2025, who starts screaming hellishly and in pain.

"AAAAAAARRRRRGHHH! MY EYE!"

"Dad!?" Ryuko yells, and now the actual Nui starts bleeding from her left eye too, as the scar on her eye bursts up, covering her entire eye with blood. It burns like hell. The world continues to flicker more and more, the bleeding Nui from 2025 jumps out of the window with one part of the scissor blade, while the real one watches the dying Isshin looking at her. Ryuko runs to Isshin and notices the real Nui on the ground, pointing with the finger towards her. Ryuko bites her teeth together and approaches Nui furiously, turns into a real monster, into Senketsu Kisaragi, with burning flames behind her. The shelves, the grounds, the walls, everything starts burning, fire appears at the door, smoke rises up, but Ryuko is perfectly visible in all of the smoke. Nui tries to hold the purple scissor blade but Ryuko steps onto her arm, effectively removing it, just like years ago, causing Nui to bleed even further in pain. Then, Ryuko grabs Nui and throws her against one of the burning shelves, with Nui coughing blood. As Nui tries to look up, she can see with her right eye how Ryuko combined both parts of the scissor blades together.

"You killed my dad! You killed my dad! You killed my dad! You killed my dad! You killed my dad You killed my dad You killed my dad You killed my dad YOU KILLED MY DAD YOU KILLED MY DAD YOU KILLED MY DAD"

"WAIT RYUKO PLEASE DON'T!" Nui begs and is hit by the scissor blades. Shadows appear out of the fire at the door, revealing Mako and Sukuyo.

Nui is on the ground, paralyzed, stuttering, acting irrational and fully out of her mind, next to the shelf. Mako runs towards Nui and shakes her.

"Hey! Nui! Nui!? NUI!" Mako yells worried.

"SHE WANTS TO KILL ME!"

"Ryuko isn't here!"

"DON'T HURT ME PLEASE RYUKO I ALREADY DID DIE WHY DO I HAVE TO DIE AGAIN PLEASE DON'T DO THIS TO ME I'LL DO EVERYTHING FOR YOU BUT PLEASE JUST DONT KILL ME!" she yells and now even can see Soichiro behind Ryuko, looking down at her with a disgusted face.

"Nui, please!" Mako yells and shakes Nui once more. Sukuyo then drags the traumatized psychopath out of the room.

"BARAZO, I NEED A BUCKET OF WATER, NOW!" Sukuyo yells and in an instant, her husband runs up the stairs and throws a full bucket of ice cold water onto Nui. Nui falls out of Mako's and Sukuyo's arms, yelling obsessed, suffering from seizure, and then, briefly after, realizing what just happened, Nui crawls behind into the darkness of the hall the group is now, with only her silhouette and her blue shining eyes visible for the family.

"She... she is gone..." Nui mumbles genuinely afraid.

"What... happened?" Mako asks careful, approaching Nui and reaching her arm to her.

"Come. You are safe here, please believe me." Mako asks careful. Nui sneaks into the darkness even further and closes her eyes.

"Leave me alone! I don't want your help! I don't need ANYONE'S help! You humans, you, y-y-you ALL ARE THE SAME!" she yells and runs into the deeper parts of the mansion, then, stair steps are

hearable - apparently she runs up to the top floor of the mansion. Up there, it's cold, and only old plywood keeps the ground solid. The last thing the Mankanshoku's hear is how the hatch closes after the stairs have been dragged up.

It's completely quiet now. Just a few more steps above them.

Nothing.

Barazo notices Nui's Fiber Rifle on the ground and picks it up. Mako is disappointed of herself. Disappointed about not being help to help Nui, or her trusting Mako.

"We might take this until she calmed down again." Barazo suggests. Sukuyo looks at her sad daughter.

"Come, Mako. We... maybe are just... too much for her. She doesn't seem like... the kind of person that can deal well with humans, or families." Sukuyo continues. Mako sighs by this sad fact and nods slowly.

As the lights of the floor go out and calmness appears, the wind is hearable.

And a quiet whimpering.

...

"Hinata?" is echoed through the halls.

"Matoi?" is answered back.

"What am I?"

"You are human. And you are Life Fiber. You were born as human... and created as Life Fiber."

"How long... do you know me already?"

"Hundreds of years. Since you are a small little Fiber. And then you've entered the world of the living."

...

2007. Soichiro works in the science labs of the REVOCS HQ. Various instruments can be used here, all for experimenting. Slowly but steady, the world builds up out of Life Fibers for Ryuko. In front of him, thousands of Life Fibers, notes, protocols, machines and more lie around. He writes something down into his notebook.

"... and Satsuki rejected the Life Fibers from her body, as expected. Ragyo still believes in a success. We will try it next year again, although I have my doubts... and it feels wrong. This is just a little child. It's a wonder she survived." he writes down and crosses out one of his points in the book. Several more are written down.

-Experimenting with Life Fibers as weapons to extend REVOCS' grip into the industry (Blades? Firearms? Vehicles?)

-Producing extraordinary clothes that can be used for battles, enhancing the wearer's combat abilities by an yet unknown extend. I call them Kamui.

-Creating artificial Life Forms with the help of Life Fibers - animals or actual humans?

-Genetical enhancement of the human body with Life Fibers.

-Discovering the origins of Life Fibers.

Soichiro then nods and closes the large laboratory. The world blurs out, Ryuko lands back in the dark halls, Life Fibers pierce through the floors, hover around, incinerate everything, then, she falls back through the ground and into Soichiro's body.

Ragyo sits next to him. Both watch TV at the moment. A little baby sits on Ragyo's lap and sleeps quietly. Soichiro looks at it.

"Satsuki's sleeping quiet." he smiles.

"She is beautiful, even after her failure." Ragyo answers who's hair became longer. It's evening and peace conquered the Kiryuin Manor.

"What do you think? Will she get a sister or a brother? Any wishes?" Soichiro asks.

"... a sister. Satsuki will be a strong woman. I can see that already. On some children, you can see their strength. She'll get through this dark world we live in, able to rule over it with wrath and elegance." Ragyo smiles slightly and touches Satsuki's little stomach, gently and careful, without waking her up. She looks so harmless and cute. Soichiro nods satisfied.

"That sounds good." he answers. Ragyo and Soichiro lean their heads to each other.

"... I should go back to work." the man says after a few minutes.

"Understandable. Life Fibers are so... versatile."

"Yes. I wonder... what we can do with them, still."

"Soichiro?"

"Ragyo?" he asks and looks at her. She kisses him suddenly and briefly. The mother then carefully puts Satsuki away and kisses Soichiro once more. He stops briefly.

"... are you sure you want to try it again? Another infusion?"

"... yes. I want this. It will work. And I want... to try something new. I know it will work."

"I trust you."

"I know you do." Ragyo answers and kisses her husband once more.

Then, the world collides in time again and disappears. Images of the REVOCS HQ appear, of Ragyo and Soichiro having breakfast together, images of the world itself - REVOCS wins in the following year more and more power, and Ryuko notices how, the longer the year endures, the more doubts come up into his mind. She latently felt them already when Ragyo came up with the idea of an Life Fiber infused human, yet somehow his trust towards his wife oppressed these feelings.

Ryuko falls back into the ground, landing with Soichiro in the presidential office of REVOCS. His wife is pregnant with Ryuko. It's afternoon, and the weather is normal.

"Ragyo?" Soichiro asks as he enters the office. She looks up to her husband.

The families "Hojo" and "Sato" experienced a sudden fall in their market power - I remember these new clothes you spoke of which use several Nexus Fibers. Is there an explanation as to why we earn so much money all of a sudden?" Soichiro asks hopelessly overquestioned. Ragyo smiles satisfied hearing this question, yet a slight feeling of wickedness is noticable - Soichiro does not notice that, Ryuko does however.

"The last advertisement campaigns for our corporation were a larger success than I expected. I did not included you into them on purpose. You always are so eager to learn more about the Life Fibers... I figured to leave you out of them."

"I see. I was simply wondering, especially since the most powerful clothing corporation in Europe, Aether Conglomerate, for whatever reason decided to commit a fusion with our company - and that their CEO simply... vanished."

"I spoke to the fine men of the Aether Conglomerate and after a few brief conversations, they were intrigued to enter our corporation - so much that they gave us their entire power." Ragyo explains distant,

without even explicitly trying to hide she did something questionable to seize the company for REVOCS.

"If you say so. Well, I mean, it's good to see you have everything under control." Soichiro answers with confidence, believing Ragyo isn't saying anything doubtful - but Ryuko feels how Soichiro doubts more and more. Ragyo nods slowly.

"It would be a shame if not, Soichiro."

"Well, I... I need to go back to the lab."

"Yes."

"See you later." he mentions and leaves the office. The distrust is growing stronger - it cannot be possible a corporation as large as Aether seriously gave everything up on REVOCS. It isn't simply believable. Something must be behind all of this.

Eventually, the world collides once more. Fire burns below Ryuko all of a sudden. It looks like the dark world has been mirrored. Is Ryuko on top of it now? It's a strange feeling. It's like these dark halls are alive and conscient. The ground above her sucks her up and into Soichiro again... and she can see herself.

As a little baby, having it's thumb in it's mouth, almost sleeping, with an open eye still up, looking at it's father.

"Is that... me?" Ryuko mumbles and leaves Soichiro's body while he's reading a book. Ryuko takes a look at herself.

It's a weird feeling... seeing yourself as a little baby... but she cannot avoid a slight little smile.

"Look at you, you little rebel." she says to herself and kneels down to herself. Ryuko again wears the REVOCS science coat. Looking at her father, she notices that he reads his own notebook. The man turns the pages over... and after a while, he starts shaking his head,

clearly hurt, and laying down the book onto the table. He digs his face down into his hands.

"Ragyo..." he mumbles hurt. Ryuko tries to somehow interact with her father but he of course cannot see or feel her at all. It's a memory after all.

"Dad..." Ryuko mumbles. It hurts seeing her dad like this. And it makes sense. He knows Ragyo for so long - and the pain he goes through is nearly indescribable. Imagine having a friend your entire life... and they are corrupted by Life Fibers. Was that the moment his heart broke and he decided to found Nudist Beach? Or was there a sooner point in his life?

Is Hinata hiding something from Ryuko?

"Hinata?" Ryuko asks. No answer. She looks into the notebook.

"... Ragyo threw Ryuko away. It's painful to just think of it. The poor girl. And the fertilized egg is gone too. She must have thrown it away as well. Everything. Not just Ryuko - absolutely everything... and she acts like this since her family died. When I think about it...

... my wife died that day too. There is but a heartless shell left, and her obsession for clothing took over.

You always were a great friend, Ragyo - you always got your point across, but you were kind to me, you took time for me when I needed you, you always were honest... and now you gave that up because you want to rule this world with clothes - and to overcome your fear of death, and oblivion.

And the worst thing, it's my fault it came this far. I should have never accepted the experiments - there shouldn't be any attempts on playing god, by creating life with Wombs that do not exist, infusing Life Fibers into humans, or performing different otherworldly things with them. Ryuko survived, and she is neither a human, nor... "clothing." She is both and nothing.

I don't know what is worse.... i... i cant do this anymore,"

The rest are tears that landed on the book.

"... fertilized egg... did they tried a third experiment... I'm sorry, dad." Ryuko mumbles sad and holds his shoulder, however, her hand goes through it.

"Oh yeah... right." she mentions.

"... Satsuki..." the man mumbles sad and shakes his head. He sits down next to his little daughter and picks her up, holding her at his stomach and slowly moving her around a bit. He sings quietly for her.

"... sleep, little Ryuko... sleep..."

Ryuko looks at her father and makes a few sounds... and eventually, she starts sleeping. And half a minute later, when tears leave her father's eyes, the world collides again.

...

In the meantime, Satsuki sits alone on the island of Okishima. It's afternoon. The zeppelin has been finished from the looks of it. Despite all the people who are loyal towards her, she feels alone.

"Satsuki." she can suddenly hear her mother say. Ragyo stands behind her, in a beautiful white winter coat, next to her daughter. Both look at the lake around the island. A few hundreds meter away is the coast that leads back on the Japanese main island.

"Satsuki. What are you doing here, so alone and forgotten?" Ragyo asks curious. Satsuki looks down.

"... Ryuko hasn't come back yet." she answers.

"She may be dead? Disabled?"

"... you dare say such things?"

"You should take it into account, my dear Satsuki. After all, everything can happen in this world. Deep inside you, your authoritarian mindset is hidden. You once were such a strong woman, and now, you fell so deep, you'd even let your sister be stolen by... a parasite."

"..."

"You are weak, Satsuki. But we can rescue you from this predicament." Ragyo mentions and looks to her daughter. Satsuki tries to fight it... but she must hear out Ragyo.

After all, Ragyo knows how the world works.

Isn't it so?

"... how?" Satsuki asks her mother curious, looking into her Life Fiber eyes.

"Make sure Nudist Beach will obey you. When Harime comes back, intimidate her until she obeys your every order - after all, that is the entire reason she exists... and she is well to intimidate, just like the little child she actually is. When Ryuko appears, you will punish her for putting her trust into a psychopath, and not into the caring sister you were and still are. These... men... Mikisugi, and Tsumugu... they shall listen to everything you want, unless they want to be punished by your wrath. And you should consider... using Life Fibers more... they may be helpful."

"Life Fibers are useful tools, indeed. I... I believe they do their work well... better than those around me... but... while I cannot force the people around me yet... I can punish Ryuko... and Harime... you are right, mother. Thank you." Satsuki realizes. A single Life Fiber flows through her eye.

"Of course, Satsuki." Ragyo smiles and kneels down in front of her daughter, raising her head to her, as if she would bow in front of a queen.

"I always were right."

"SATSUKI!" Sanageyama yells all of a sudden. Ragyo disappears as Satsuki looks to her friend.

"YOU GOTTA COME WITH ME, DUDE!"

"What's wrong?!"

"It's about Ryuko!"

Satsuki instantly jumps up and follows Sanageyama through the base down to the main halls. The podest in the main hall has been upgraded with large stadium like monitors, as they were once used at the Ragyo Stadium. Nonon's concert will start soon. Gamagoori, Nonon and the rest of the group look shocked at the monitor, seeing the Neo-REVOCS logo on it. It has distortion effects. Life Fibers crawl it up and down, and a single drop of blood slowly rolls down the white R inside it.

"These bastards got access into our systems! Now he knows where we are and he even has access to everything!" Tsumugu yells angry when he see's Satsuki, yet she ignores his complaint. Satsuki walks through the dozens of people and up to the podest, while Houka sweats as he tries to gain control over the area again!

"Can't you do this any faster!?" Sanageyama asks Houka.

"This isn't good... not at all... how did they... oh no... there must be a backdoor." the hacker reacts shocked. The people around the Elite Four are all curious and yet shocked about how Neo-REVOCS was able to hack into the organization's security.

Then suddenly everyone stops talking and goes completely quiet, with only Houka writing more lines of code, as the screen flickers, and Ichiro appears from the dark, with a slight, sinister smile.

"Well hello there, naked fanatics. And Miss Kiryuin." Ichiro greets. No one says a thing. He's wearing his coat.

"Recently, my dear Doppelgänger Nui visited me and brought me a present in form of Satsuki Kiryuin's younger sister Ryuko Matoi. At first I couldn't believe it, after all, Nui hates me, why would she give me such a great gift? She took all these risks to get Matoi over here and it... it kind of surprised me, really.

Dearest Satsuki, how have you been? I hope everything is still going well in your mind."

"... what happened with Ryuko? Where is she?" Satsuki asks impatient.

"Ryuko is alive and here with me in this room. Since we had a slight little accident, she stopped talking all of a sudden. It must have hit you hard when Ryuko left you, isn't it so?" he asks calm and smiles.

"... grrr..."

"If you wouldn't have a family like me, you wouldn't care. Families make you weak though, and you, Kiryuin, you are the living proof for that. I can see in your tired eyes you did not had a single calm night, in addition to the Life Fiber Sickness, that is. Do you miss Hoomaru too? Did you even felt bad for her when she died? After all, she was your loyal servant."

"... why would you care?"

"Well... are you still as sane as weeks ago?"

"What do you want, Harime? Talk, or leave."

"So impatient. Well, I can't blame you on that. This world is dying and you make it unnecessarily difficult for yourself. Come to Neo-REVOCS. Surrender. All your friends are allowed to live, and the High Entity will judge your actions. I will take this world and make it

the beautiful place it always should have been. This world belongs to the Life Fibers, it always did - without us, you would be nothing."

"Ridiculous. You fear our power. We once defeated the parasitarian aliens you are - and we will do it again. You just want to get rid of me, because you know as long as I am alive and free, you will never be able to accomplish your goals. Where is this High Entity you always speak of?"

"It'll come. You'll see. That reminds me... would you like to see your sister - it'll give you the confident feeling of knowing she is alive."

"I want to talk with her."

"I am afraid this might not work."

"... why... can't I talk... with her?" Satsuki asks, her voice going darker and more threatening as she walks a few steps forwards to the largest monitor above her. The world around her blurs out in black - all humans disappear - all lights vanish. It's only Satsuki, the pedestal, and the monitors.

A tunnel vision.

"I fear my Doppelgänger has been... jesting with you, for quite some time. She... she remembered what your sister did back then, on this ship, "Naked Sol." In the end, she got her revenge after all. She took revenge. Ryuko took revenge. You took revenge. Your mother took revenge.

This entire family is full of hate - over mere Life Fibers.

What a sad circle." Ichiro explains.

"Nui... took revenge?"

"See, Satsuki, she..." Ichiro says and pretends to think, looking for the right words, while looking into Satsuki's eyes, when in truth he knows exactly what to say.

"... she disarmed and... well... see for yourself." Ichiro smiles and takes a few steps back.

Ryuko is hanging there, on the ceiling, bloody, with dull shoulder and leg parts, her limbs removed, and blood dropping out of them despite. The bandages have been removed. The Nexus Fibers that replace Ryuko's bones are open and moving around quickly, looking for something to connect on. On the ground is more blood. Ichiro looks at Ryuko briefly and then back at Satsuki.

Satsuki just stares at the screen.

"... sister..."

"You may should have killed Nui when you had the chance. For the record: at this moment, Nui's taking a nice bath up in the Grand Couturier's quarters, sucking up all the fine blood her Ryuko had to offer. Ryuko's screams when she lost her first arm where amusing to say the least, does Nudist Beach have any sadists among them? Gamagoori, aren't you a masochist, we could do the same on you if you'd like to fulfill your perverted thoughts. Oh well. I believe someone is getting into a lot of trouble, and this time it wasn't even me who did something.

Then again, I already took this old fool and your secretary." Ichiro explains and walks towards Ryuko, moving her head up. Her eyes are closed.

"Look how calm she is. I'm sure she thinks she is dead. A little spoiler: she of course is not! But now she is just as much of a parasite like I am, aha!" Ichiro grins and creates a window to the dark halls of the Life Fibers. In that window, Satsuki and Ichiro can see Ryuko, moving around briefly as a Life Fiber Being until flames appear, seemingly consuming Ryuko, and then she falls into the ground.

Ichiro holds his hand in front of his mouth, pretending to be shocked.

"Oh no! She is a Life Fiber Being! Who would have expected this terrifying appearance!? It's almost as if... she is discovering what her real "me" is!"

"..."

"You ain't saying anything?! What, did that really took your ability to speak? Wow, Satsuki, you really are..."

"Turn the monitors off." Satsuki orders.

"Ohoho, looks like someone's getting angry! Satsuki, are you..."

"TURN THESE FUCKING MONITORS OFF BEFORE I KILL SOMEONE!"

Nudist Beach soldiers walk behind the monitors and turn off the power, but it takes a few seconds, and in these few seconds, Ichiro just laughs happily while leaving Ryuko alone in the room.

As the monitors are turned off, Satsuki turns around with evil intentions and walks through the halls, drawing her blade, and every step is like a demon has been unleashed, that's how much aura her wrath has. No one even stares at her.

Satsuki arrives at Nui's room and slashes the door up. Four clones are in the room and happily playing a few board games until they see Satsuki, looking at her curious and with a smile.

"Ooooooh, Lady Satsuki, hey, how are you doing!? Wow, why are you holding your swo..."

Satsuki rams the "Empress' Blade" into the clone's stomach, with the clone looking surprised, and then, Satsuki moves the blade up through the doll and cuts it in half, eventually splitting apart and dying by dissolving. The other three clones draw their needle blades out of panic to protect each other, they aren't even trying to attack Satsuki, they simply want to protect themselves. Satsuki however

attacks the second clone with a precise attack, cutting it's hands off, causing it to dissolve.

"Oh no!" the third clone yells scared and is then grabbed by Satsuki and slammed against the shelf. The shelf falls onto the clone who now is unable to free himself.

"S-SATSUKI, LADY SATSUKI PLEASE WAIT!" the fourth clone begs and throws it's needle blade in front of Satsuki.

"DO YOU OBEY THE KIRYUIN'S JUST LIKE YOUR MISTRESS ONCE SWORE TO?"

"I DO, YES, PLEASE DON'T DO ANYTHING!" the clone begs scared. The Life Fiber Sickness overwhelms Satsuki, her eyes light up red briefly, then turn blue again, and then, Satsuki smiles.

"Then cast your body away, clone." Satsuki smiles evil. The clone's eye grows larger.

"... please no."

"... DO IT ALREADY!" she yells. The poor clone nods scared and starts tearing up.

"... y-yes... as you wish, Lady Satsuki." it stutters, creates sharp arms and then decapitates itself with a forced smile. Briefly after, both the head and the body dissolve and the Life Fibers are suck into Satsuki's blade just like Junketsu. The furious woman proceeds to destroy the entire room. Selfies of Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui during the journey from Tokyo to Ôsaka are demolished, the bed cut open, the walls destroyed. Mikisugi appears.

"Satsuki! Calm down, you..."

"DON'T EVEN DARE GETTING INTO MY PATH!"

Mikisugi therefore takes a few steps away, knowing Satsuki is dead serious. She demolishes more of the room, then puts the blade back.

Mikisugi see's the helpless clone and tries to help it up, but just as he is able to remove the shelf, Satsuki appears with a flame thrower from the arsenal of the facility, burning the entire room and the clone while Mikisugi can barely escape from the flames.

"I PROTECTED HER WHEN RYUKO WAS AGAINST HER! AND SHE DARES TO SLAUGHTER MY SISTER!"

"Satsuki..."

As the room burns up, Satsuki turns the flamethrower off and puts it onto the ground, while the fire burns out. She takes a few breathes, until her eyes turn red once more. Satsuki kneels down with headaches.

"... what has happened... to Ryuko... what..." Satsuki mumbles. Mikisugi carefully touches her shoulder.

"You... are you..."

"... it's this sickness... it's devouring me."

...

...

...

A guitar is hearable. The little four year old Satsuki sits in front of her dad, watching him play guitar in the Kiryuin manor. Outside at the pavillion, his wife Ragyo drinks a tea. Satsuki smiles happily. He's playing a few quiet, but nice tones for his little daughter.

"Dad?"

"Yes, Satsuki?" Soichiro asks.

"I want to learn guitar too!" she laughs happy. Soichiro chuckles and sits down next to Satsuki.

"Alright then. Touch one of the strings. Like this." he says and touches a string with his finger. Satsuki tries it herself with three fingers, and when she lets off, a loud tone appears. She giggles happily, Soichiro grins.

"Nice!"

"I can play guitar too!"

"Oh yes you can. You are great!"

Satsuki tries some more strings. While she uses the guitar, Ragyo walks through the room.

"I see you are dealing with Satsuki. Good. I'll be back soon."

"Of course, Ragyo." Soichiro answers cold and watches his wife leaving the room.

"Hoomaru! Come with me." Soichiro hears. Quick stair steps are audible next, and briefly through the hall, he can see Hoomaru. She seems to be sixteen or seventeen already. Ryuko notices his inner conflict. He isn't feeling comfortable here. His conscience says to leave and take Satsuki with him to Ryuko at home, but if he does that, he may could threaten an upcoming rebellion. The entire plan he is preparing with the few people he has around him - Mikisugi, Tsumugu and Kinue - also depends on Satsuki being able to understand what her task will be in the future.

It would be only right to rescue Satsuki, and yet, he has to let her suffer. She has to grow up in an hostile environment, in order to lead and resist her mother's influence. And he must realize that Ryuko's future does not lie in his hands much longer - she has to find her own path, without his guiding hand, in a dark world that has been torn apart by the greed of people for wealth, power, and Life Fibers... the most valuable of things.

"Dad, I'm hungry." Satsuki says. Soichiro continues to look at the hall, then looks down to his daughter.

"... what do you want to eat?"

"... uhm... do we have something... tasty?"

"Of course. Let's find out." he answers and holds Satsuki's little hand. Both of them go to the kitchen. The memory blurs out and Ryuko arrives in the dark world anew. Explosions are audible, the sound of a rocket launcher obliterating a car, fire, then Ryuko's body is lighting up in flames, yet she does not feel pain. Eventually, five large Life Fiber pillars from different directions appear and collide into Ryuko, causing the halls to light up once brightly. Dead Life Fibers are visible, and finally, Ryuko lands back in the ground and in an... strange uncomfortable feeling body.

She can hear a man crying in the room next door. Everything looks so sterile and clinical, Soichiro feels so weird... then steps and a door can be heard.

"Isshin." Mikisugi says. Isshin looks to Mikisugi.

"... we've buried Kinue."

"As much as the loss is painful, we'll move on."

"How do you know if your theory is right? The Kamui... she... she got teared apart. Life Fibers that obey to the will of their wearer."

"We will find it out, Aikuro."

"This is suicide, you saw it. What we are doing isn't anything better than what Ragyo had in mind with your child."

"And yet it's for the right cause."

"Right cause? She was my friend! She was Tsumugu's sister! We sent her into a suicide mission!"

"Everything we do can be a suicide mission." Isshin reacts annoyed. Mikisugi closes his eyes and sighs.

"The lone fact that we have to hide in an underground base from REVOCS and the Kiryuin's should clear up well enough that we can die any second. If someone has to die, then to find a way to bring us to victory. Kinue's death was painful, yes, however, if we continue to whine after her, we will never come far. Get yourself together! I need you just like Tsumugu and the other scientists!"

"... yeah. Sure." Mikisugi answers and leaves the room. Tsumugu is still crying in the room next door. In front of Isshin lies the Kamui Kinue used. There's still blood on it, and it seems to seek for more. Isshin looks at it with a disgusted face expression, grabbing it up.

"You parasites... will not conquer this world. Ryuko... Satsuki... this organization... they will be your end."

The Kamui sings in an horrible voice. Isshin opens a large oven like chamber and puts the piece of clothing into it, then activating the oven. Tortured singing can be heard, then the obsessed Kamui slams against a window. It takes several attempts the next two weeks and hours to burn and eventually kill it. This parasite deserved it for killing Kinue Kinagase.

Two scientists from Nudist Beach approach Isshin.

"Dr. Matoi. We've finished a new Kamui prototype."

"Test it on someone new." Isshin answers ice cold.

"Dad?!" Ryuko wonders and tries to get out of her body.

"Are you sure?"

"We need to risk lives to save our planet." he continues. The scientists are seriously concerned about Isshin's experiments... but he probably is right.

"As you wish."

Ryuko falls out of Isshin's body and is back in her REVOCS scientist coat. Instead of staying with Isshin, she follows the scientists like a ghost through the rooms. The testing room in which Kinue got torn apart is bloody. The young woman can even hear Tsumugu's crying quietly, as if the room saved the sounds for new visitors. When she starts to concentrate on the crying... she actually is able to manipulate the memory enough to turn the time in it back, seeing Tsumugu on the ground, crying in front of the last remains of his dead sister.

"Kinue..." the otherwise cold and grim man mourns. Ryuko sighs. Even if she did this voluntarily... Isshin willing to sacrifice humans to the Kamui project hits her heart deeply, making clear once more that, no matter how honest and kind her father seemingly was, his other side, when he became Isshin, was barely better than Ragyo's deeds.

Was he better than Ragyo at all? Maybe.

Did that make him a good person though? Certainly not.

Everyone has to die one day, but no one has to do it necessarily if it can be avoided somehow. Tsumugu is alone in the room because of Kinue's death... all for science. Just like Ragyo and her insane deeds that caused her to throw Ryuko away like trash... all for the Life Fibers.

"Dad... how... but... and all of this for Senketsu?" she asks herself. Time goes by quicker, and Ryuko is teleported back into Isshin's body. Days and hours pass in which Isshin always stands at the same position of the room next to the window - days and weeks go by. Tsumugu and Mlkisugi stand next to him the first days, but as the amount of victims rises, the larger their doubts become... until Tsumugu gives up, disappointed and destroyed, with an oath to destroy every single Life Fiber.

"I got enough of this, Isshin! This project is a failure! My sister died for something that could not work at all... and you don't care. I'll make sure the Life Fibers will vanish... they all are parasites and they will be annihilated!" Tsumugu yells angry inside Isshin's head, in the blue room the old man notes down his experiments.

... and after several more weeks, Mikisugi, as loyal as he is to Nudist Beach and Isshin's general idea, gives up, as the dying simply does not end.

"Isshin... I cannot continue this with a clean heart. Every week, two or three people die. All of them voluntarily... and still they die. We need to finish this project or give it up. You... you don't do anything else anymore. The end... not always justifies the means, not in this case, Isshin, and you have to understand this." Mikisugi comments and leaves the room disappointed.

And still, Isshin continues, the next weeks, the entire next year, until he starts working on an actual Kamui thanks to the results he gathered, for the next ten years, and on the Scissor Blades. Countless attempts are needed, hours of sweat, frustration, and disappointment pass by, of the sheer knowledge it was not just Ragyo's, but also his fault on endangering the entire world, and now, he wants to pay for this.

In the end, he did paid for his deeds, with his life, when the Kamui was about to be done, when he finally rearranged the Nexus Fibers perfectly... and it was that day, where a bomb got planted, and he was killed by Ragyo's Grand Couturier.

And in the moment he can hear Nui's voice, Isshin, Nui, and everything around him dissolves, and Ryuko lands in the dark world of the Life Fibers.

"Matoi." Hinata says.

"Hinata!"

"... you learn... more and more... about your father... about your family... it is quite fascinating, is it not?"

"... I... don't know. Dad, he... he wanted to save the world but he... so many things went wrong. I get why he did all of this, but..."

"Not just that. He feels responsible... for so many things. He himself... is guilty of the death of many you caused. Senketsu... your friend... is that too... and ironically... it was your own father, who created his own death."

"His own... death? He fled from Ragyo, how could he created his own death?"

"Oh, my Ryuko... you seem to not understand yet... but you will... and you shall see for yourself... you watched his memories closely... but maybe, a final clue will help you, before you face your father."

"The hell you are talking about? What clue?!"

"You shall see."

Ryuko falls again into the ground and lands in Soichiro's body.

She can see herself again, as a little baby, being processed by the Life Fiber machines. Her back is completely cut open, and Life Fibers feast on her organs.

"... why doesn't it make any progress!?" Ragyo asks negatively surprised. Soichiro shakes his head.

"It should work! But I don't know why. We may have to wait longer. Maybe... it needs more time?"

"We are waiting for five hours!"

"But something must happen! She... she somehow has to react on the Life Fiber infusion!" Soichiro answers desperate as he looks at

his little baby. Ragyo shakes her head in disappointment and turns off the machines, causing Ryuko to land carefully on the plate again.

"Ragyo, what are you doing?!"

"Accept it, Soichiro. Our attempt was once again a failure."

"What do you want to do now? She's just a child."

"Indeed. And as such, she will leave this world as quick as she entered it. We will look forward."

"Ragyo..." he mumbles as Ryuko is sent into the abyss of the REVOCS labs, seemingly killing the child. Soichiro only feels emptiness.

"Mom..."

"I have no hopes on our third subject. I might have an idea on what to do with it and how to use the fertilized egg you provided, but it will fail too... just like everything you had in mind. I might just throw it away." Ragyo answers and leaves the room, waving behind. Soichiro doesn't care.

She just threw Ryuko away.

Just like that.

But Ryuko heard what she said.

"Wait, what egg!? WHAT FERTILIZED EGG!? WHO IS SHE TALKING ABOUT!? DOES SHE..."

And suddenly, the world is torn apart and consumed by flames. Out of these flames, Life Fibers appear that grant Ryuko her human body. Then, she falls through the depths of the dark halls, with screams, fire sounds, destruction... baby screams...

...

The next night has started. Nui sits alone in the top floor of the mansion, in a cold corner, with the moon shining into the room, allowing her to at least read what Isshin wrote into his book.

"... and Ragyo always talks about these Life Fiber infusions. Hybrids. I don't know what I should think of this idea. We should rather try it with Life Fibers only and keep the human part to a minimum. But for that instance, we need something like a Life Fiber Womb. The baby has to grow in that womb, but the beginning of the process has to be done manually, possibly by a man, as the egg cell can be made out of Life Fibers. Ragyo knows something about that, she never explicitly explained how this works though. It doesn't matter, I suppose. Maybe this person could be an adult from the start. But how? We can't make a Life Fiber Womb, let alone let the Nexus Fiber simulate the process of growing a baby in it. I simply cannot imagine it to work. And how is the baby supposed to be supported during it's growing process?

... I don't know what Ragyo thinks, but it concerns me."

Nui turns the page.

"Ryuko was a failure for Ragyo. She just threw her away. I can't take this any longer. I trusted her. I did everything for her, followed her blindly... and only after she threw her own child away like a tool, I realized what woman she became.

It doesn't matter what I do. I gave her two children. I even fertilized an egg with my sperm for this Life Fiber Womb she wants to create. The poor child will be thrown away as well, if the egg wasn't thrown away at all already. Maybe it's for the better. One innocent person less that does not have to die an unnecessary death. Ragyo is sick in the head. The Life Fiber corrupted her.

I fear they did the same to me. This is my last message. May I never open this book anymore. I need to solve the problem I created... I'm just another monster in a world full of monsters.

Maybe I deserve to die just like my wife."

Nui's eyes grow larger and larger in the darkness. She starts stuttering briefly and looks into the mirror. She can see herself.

Even a hallucination of herself, smiling, and holding her finger in front of her mouth.

Life Fiber Womb. An fertilized egg by Isshin.

But Mama Ragyo always said you were born in a Life Fiber Womb, weren't you, Nui?

Wait a moment.

Life Fiber Womb. Egg.

Life Fiber Womb. Egg.

Life Fiber Womb. Egg.

Egg.

Egg.

Egg.

Egg.

Egg.

Nui.

Nui.

Nui.

Nui.

Nui.

Nui.

... **dad** .

"... your dear dead daddy, you miss him, do you?"

"I'm sure you miss your dear dead daddy, or?"

"But I was so kind to your dad and he just took my eye!"

"Daddy would be disappointed if he see's you like this."

"You won't avenge your daddy like that! Put some effort into it, Ryuko love!"

"You don't have a family, Harime. You are alone. And it's good like that."

"You don't have a mother. You don't have a father. You don't have siblings. You only have yourself and the Life Fibers."

"You are a free Being, only obliged to obey the will of the Kiryuins."

"I'm sure you miss your daddy, do you, Ryuko!?"

"Yeees.

That's right.

I killed your dad."

She let's the book drop. Panic.

"... I killed my own dad."

"... he... hehe... ehehehee..."

...

Ryuko lands on the ground, in her human body, with her REVOCS scientist clothes. Mirror's are visible, everywhere, up, below, like shards... in all of those is fire that does not feel as such. When Ryuko stands up, she... can see a man in the distance, looking into an abyss, noticable on the red lights in front of him. Images of Satsuki, Ragyo, Ryuko, Tsumugu and Mikisugi are visible in the mirrors. Images of the train from the Hayabusa-District when this memory started. The garden, in which Soichiro and Ragyo sat before Izumi Kiryuin appeared. Wife and husband as they cuddle together.

Coming closer to the man that is her father indeed, she notices he wears the same REVOCS scientist coat like her. The closer she gets to him, the more uncomfortable she feels.

"Dad... !?" Ryuko yells. Soichiro turns around. As he see's Ryuko... he does not know what to say.

"... Ryuko..."

"DAD!" Ryuko yells and runs towards him

"What... what are you doing here, Ryuko?" he asks worried as Ryuko comes closer. Instead of hugging him, she stays a few meter away from him.

"I... I saw you... and... mom and Satsuki and..."

"Did you defeated them?"

"... what?"

"Did you and Satsuki defeated your mother?"

"... Dad, I..."

"Did you defeated them, Ryuko? The Life Fibers? REVOCS? Talk to me! I need to know it!"

"Y-yeah but dad, I..."

"Then how did you end up in this place!?"

"... what is this bullshit... why are you yelling at me?"

"... if the Life Fibers have been defeated... how are you here... how are you wandering with the dead?"

"I'm not dead."

"But you still stand here!"

"You killed all these people for a Kamui? You... you helped Ragyo?!"

"Ryuko, what was I supposed to do? I couldn't let REVOCS destroy the world! I... paid for that already. My death was not thrown away."

"YOU LEFT ME ALONE! FOR SO LONG!"

"I know! But I couldn't let you stay with me! You couldn't have a normal childhood and I know I cannot make up for this anymore! But if I would have not done it, we all would be dead!"

"Tell that all the people you sacrificed for Senketsu! Tell that... Satsuki and to me... directly into my eyes! We did what you wanted... but you lost yourself in your Life Fiber studies as well!"

"I know! Please... understand how I felt."

"I know how you felt! I was you! I felt everything... but you gotta understand how I feel too."

"... I'm sorry, Ryuko. I am, truly."

"... I know."

"You... did you kill Ragyo and my murderer? Is the world safe?"
Soichiro asks.

"Ragyo... mom, she, she committed suicide. She's gone. So did her murderer. And now she's back."

"Nui was her name, yes?"

"... Dad?"

Soichiro looks up to Ryuko.

"... Mom once said Nui was made inside a Life Fiber Womb. She is a monster, a parasite, you, you can only kill her with the Scissor Blades.

This... Womb you spoke of in your notes... you spoke of an egg that had to be fertilized, a third subject which you created and Ragyo raised in that womb..."

"I'm sorry."

"... is... she my sister...?"

"Ryuko... I..."

"IS SHE MY SISTER!?" Ryuko yells impatient. Soichiro takes a deep breath.

"I thought the experiment would fail, just Satsuki's and your's before I realized you succeeded!"

Ryuko falls onto the ground and slams her fist onto it.

"... I can't believe this shit... this is too much... I can't take this... she... she's sick in the head, she's a psycho, and... I..."

"Ryuko. If I could, I would..."

"NO! SHUT UP!"

"..."

"... do you know what she did to me? To Satsuki and the others? And... you made her... with mom?"

"I knew only about her when I came here after my death! I should have never accepted these experiments!"

Ryuko nods slowly.

"... and yet I still have to kill her."

"She is Life Fiber, Ryuko. A parasite. It's... like with your mom. You have to do that. For Humanity. And the world. Just like... I had to kill people."

"... I'll do that, dad. I'll take her down. She... did much more than just killing you. And she'll pay for that." Ryuko reacts angry and stands up.

"But I ain't doing this because you told me so! I do that... because she plagues me for years!"

"... I know, Ryuko. And I apologize for that." he says. Soichiro sighs, disappointed of everything that happened. And still, Ryuko approaches him, looking up to him.

There is only regret in his face.

"... sorry, dad. I... only have this chance to talk with you. I don't... want to fuck it up. Not this time."

Soichiro nods briefly.

"Me neither."

Ryuko hugs her dad. He musters her.

"You really became a great woman. I see you walk through this world through the few memories the Life Fibers provide here. Whenever you like someone, you appear like a blooming rose, full of kindness,

if maybe a few mean jokes here and there... and in the battle, even though you feel so vulnerable... if only you had thorns like a thistle... but you do, Ryuko. You have those. And friends. And more.

More than I ever had. And I am proud of the woman in front of me you became."

"... thanks..."

Soichiro cuddles his daughter briefly and looks through this dark world. There is no resolve in his face. You can tell the time here has changed him. He is much calmer, much more reasonable, he knows what he did and he knows he cannot change it anymore.

"... if you'd see Satsuki..." Ryuko smiles briefly.

"I once saw her in a short memory. Short hair. She almost is as tall as I am. Did you... visited a strip club?"

"... I uh... it wasn't my idea." Ryuko grins. Soichiro chuckles and pats her hair briefly.

"Heh, she likes to tease you, does she?"

"You have no idea how much." Ryuko laughs. Suddenly, a light appears behind Ryuko and Soichiro. Entity Hinata appears and walks towards them. Father and daughter look at it.

"Dr. Matoi..." the Entity greets.

"... Hinata."

"You know each other?" Ryuko asks.

"I... am a part of Hinata. At least in his personality."

"Wait what?!"

"Hinata is a manifestation of the High Entity. When I died, I came into this place, as a result of my experiments with the Life Fibers and me injecting Life Fibers into my body as well. They took my mind into this world. When I ended up here, I met Hinata here... he was the only Entity that listened to me. He gave me a small place to "live" here, and in exchange for that, I gave Hinata a shard of my personality. The one that wants knowledge."

"So... but you aren't a Life Fiber, right?"

"I'm not. But I was still sent here. I had the choice of not going to... but I wanted to know. And well... now I am here for... five years."

"And Hinata always was an Entity here? What's with the others?"

"Behind every Entity is a Being from one or several worlds. The highest Entity is so powerful it cannot be told what it even is. I think... it is the Hive Mind of the Life Fibers, the first one to exist. Figuring out all of this will take an eternity... but since I am dead, time does not matter here anymore. I don't age. And uhm... it's good that way. I'd rather have my young body than walking around as a hunchback." Soichiro smiles. Ryuko looks at Hinata.

"Your father is an extraordinary Being. He is... like a god. Truly magnificent."

"You said you know me for hundreds of years. How?"

"Do not forget, Ryuko... we all once were little Fibers like you. My mind, my memories, my personalities all exist for much longer than I could ever tell... but this physical form only for a few years. And yours exist since twenty-two years."

"And... what is this all about with the Life Fibers? You said you are capable of more than just sucking blood."

Hinata nods slightly and touches Soichiro's shoulder respectfully, as if he admires him.

"Your father... teaches me... emotions, and empathy. What feelings are. They are... beautiful and yet... scary. You humans... are, maybe not the strongest species we saw in all of our journeys, but the most paradox, and interesting one. The Entities... wish to eliminate you... but I cannot allow that. Neither me... nor the followers I have around.

Your... little sister, Harime, she is one of my followers as well."

"... I see. It... makes more sense now. You never wanted to fuck me over. You just want to learn more."

"Indeed, it is all... a learning process. Life is a process of learning." Hinata reacts. Soichiro smiles at Ryuko. She looks at him, while Hinata points at the exit.

"We should move further, dearest child of Soichiro." Hinata suggests. Ryuko sighs and looks up to her dad.

"... dad?"

"Yes, Ryuko?"

"... I... I never could really meet you. But these memories... they showed so much... they told me so much about you. I always... thought you are a heartless man who never cared for me. But when I saw you with mom before she got insane, or when you cared for me and Satsuki, and, and the guitar... it was really nice to witness it with my own eyes, you know?" Ryuko smiles.

"... as dark as the times were, I love to remember them. I know what I am, Ryuko. I know the Life Fibers took me for all my experiments, and despite my fears, I still am here, in a world full of feelings. Hinata... he is right... when he says that the Life Fibers... can feel things. They try to. Don't ever forget that behind this ice cold, bitter man always also were a young and kind person. Just like with your mother. Despite my words and the tasks I gave you, and the actions she did to you, as cruel as they were... there was a time where she

was a good hearted person... but her anxieties and fears lead her to the High Entity and eventually caused her heart to die.

I only wish you will have a good life, just like your sister... and the little one, if... you decide to risk it." he reacts melancholic and gets hugged by Ryuko. He kisses his daughter's forehead.

"Since... I am Life Fiber too... when I die one day, will I see you again?"

"... mhm. I'm sure you will. But until that happens, promise to live for me. You deserve a good life. You all do. Everyone does in the end."

"... of course. I won't disappoint you."

"I know you won't. And if you ever are unsafe about something... no matter how dangerous it is, or hard... as much as this sentence can be used as a cliché... but it's true... just listen to what your heart says. It's why we have one. I gave it up when Ragyo tried to kill me. But you won't do this mistake. Please."

Ryuko nods understanding.

"Dad?"

"Yes?"

"I love you."

Soichiro smiles. A tear leaves his eye.

That's the first time he ever heard this from his daughter.

"... I love you too, Ryuko. We'll see us again someday. Hinata will protect you. He promised me that. You will see." Soichiro nods. Ryuko takes a deep breath and then follows Hinata through the halls until she reaches the white Life Fiber gate.

Soichiro can rest, knowing his daughter was able to meet him properly. He now knows, despite all the things he did, she loves him. Despite all the good and bad sides he has.

We all have these sides. Humans. Life Fibers. Everyone.

It was a good lesson to learn.

...

AN: I uploaded all drawings on DeviantArt too. Just type in "DanieD00" in the search and go onto my profile and you'll see everything. :D We'll see each other again in the next Chapter, "A Daughter I Would Love To Wear"... time to visit Mama Ragyo. ;)

A Daughter I Would Love To Wear

AN: Welcome to the newest chapter, hope everyone is doing alright! This chapter is pretty long too and this time, we'll get to see a look into Ragyo's memories and past! I'm sure this could get very very interesting! We also learn a bit more about the Life Fibers and the Life Fiber Sickness today. This chapter does have some very disturbing content but I think that was to expect if we talk about Ragyo. I hope you guys enjoy it as always and thanks for all the reviews from the last chapter, really made me happy to read them! Yeah, Nui could definitely use a therapist, OneRandomFiber. :D And yup, Ichiro needs to be dealt with. If you think Ichiro did some major fucked up stuff with Ryuko, oh boy, I promise you, that's not all. He'll get worse, trust me. Remember guys, this story also tries to teach the reader to never give up hope. It's pretty dark and I can tell you guys the next chapters will be even darker but all I can say is that the story has a good ending. :) Anyway, I'm speaking too much again, have fun reading!

A school bell rings. It's cloudy at the moment, the weather rather uncalm, but it could be much worse. Children around eleven to 13 years old leave their class rooms. The teachers walk through the halls to make sure no one is causing trouble. The school appears old, yet noble, reminding best of an old castle that experienced a few slight modern changes here and there - especially at the walls and pillars that lead to the atrium. This is no doubt a school only a certain kind of children can visit.

Those, who have rich parents, or that seem to be extremely qualified. And in these times, only few have one of those privileges.

Among these kids, one of them stands out, being ignored by the others. It has grey hair. A genetical defect that came with it's birth. Alone, this kid walks through the halls of this large, cold school building. It's fellow students doesn't want to do anything with this young girl, thanks to her strange appearance that makes her look

older than she is. While walking through the halls of the castle-like school, she arrives in a huge library in which a few kids seem to bully a young boy who's trying to read a book.

"Soichi's always thinking about these red Fibers!"

"No one likes you, Soichi! It's better to just stay at home!"

The young girl hides behind the wall. The children notice her nonetheless - they can't stand the girl either. Then, one of the children takes Soichiro's book and throws it against the wall next to the girl - a few notes fall out of it. They eventually have to retreat as this causes the attention of the librarian. Soichiro sighs and lays his head down onto the table... it's clear he must be treated like that for a while already. The young girl walks to his book and the notes, grabbing it and giving it back to him. She notices a lot of these notes include Life Fibers, and biology in general.

"... hey" she says shy. Soichiro looks up - he appears so innocent and hurt.

"Uhm... this is your's, right?" she asks. Soichiro nods. The girl lays her bag on the bench and then sits down to him.

"... who are you?"

"I'm Ragyo. And you are Soichiro, yes?"

"... mhm."

"I know these people. They are really mean. My dad signed me up for this school even though I didn't wanted to."

"... same."

"You know a lot about Life Fibers, right?" she smiles.

"... I do, yes."

"Cool! I do too! My mom works a lot with these things and my dad too. He says you can do a lot with them."

"Really?" he asks and seems to be a bit more interested now.

"Mhm!"

"I just... I don't know... they really did a lot on this world... I mean... eh, I don't know..."

"Hey, head's up! These people are just stupid. *sigh* But I have to do my homework now. I hate maths. It's really annoying."

"I'm okay in maths."

"Can... you maybe help me?"

"... uhm, sure." he smiles carefully and watches Ragyo opening her bag, laying down a book and a notebook with the tasks she started. Eventually, both start working on the homework. Behind them in the corner of this old but noble building is a window, giving a small gaze to bushes, and beautiful flowers, and the sight to the cloudy sky. Quietly, the clock ticks down, while both work on each other's homework.

Ryuko is now in Ragyo's body, and inside her memories. And this seems to be the first one. Time passes - there is no lesson for today anymore, both just wait until their parents pick them up. As both read a small, exciting short story, they can hear clear, deep steps. Ragyo and Soichiro look up, with Ragyo smiling briefly after.

This is her father. He has a short hair cut, black hair, a large black trenchcoat that reaches to his knees, a suitcase in his hand and his face has a few wrinkles already. He appears to be a man you don't want to get trouble with. Ragyo reacts with a happy "Dad!" and stands up, while Soichiro looks at her.

"This is my dad! Dad, this is Soichiro! Soichiro is really nice! He is a friend." Ragyo smiles. The tall man slowly nods towards the young boy.

"I... assume you need to go now?" he asks uncalm. Ragyo nods.

"Mhm! But we can meet each other tomorrow again, okay?" she smiles happy. This answer incites hope in Soichiro. He must have felt very lonely the entire time - having a friend he can look forward to now really can cheer someone up.

"Yeah... okay." he reacts. Ragyo puts her items back into the bag and waves at Soichiro as she and her father leave the building. Ragyo smiles at her dad while walking through the halls.

"You haven't spoken about him yet." the tall man with a slightly deeper voice says.

"I've met him today! He really is nice."

"I can see you like him."

"Mhm! He knows a lot about Life Fibers, just like you!"

"Interesting. What does he know?" the father answers while walking through the halls of the school with his daughter. A few students are still here. When they see Ragyo's dad, they take a few steps back - he seems to have an threatening aura which however Ragyo can't notice. Outside, they enter the car and start driving.

"He says Life Fibers exist for a very, very long time, before the dinosaurs, and that they helped us! He even knows there are many different ones!"

"... indeed."

"He's been reading about them for a few years already."

"Good. He sounds ambitious."

"What does that mean?"

"That means he might have great goals, and if you give him a task, he will finish it. Having a friend like him is never bad, my child."

"He is really nice!"

"That's good."

"Can you tell me more about your experiments?"

"I'll show you something fun later. Your mother... does not like it when I work with Life Fibers."

"Mom is stupid. She is almost never at home and when she is, she just looks evil."

"She is very mean sometimes, yes. Especially when it comes to Life Fibers. If she'd knew what we Kiryuin's really are..."

"What are we?"

"We... are heroes, so to speak. We have a huge task to finish. It's a bit like with your friend and his ambitious interest in Life Fibers." the man says and looks into the mirror. Ragyo looks curious. Ryuko notices how comfortable her future mother feels around her dad. But when Ragyo thinks of Izumi, there isn't much. It's a bit like Izumi doesn't properly exist for Ragyo... or Ragyo is ignored by her mother.

"One day, my child, you'll be leading this huge corporation and your young brother will help you. You should find as many friends as you can. This boy is a good start. Keep him as such. There aren't many children that have an interest in Life Fibers. And he... does seem reasonable and polite, if a bit too quiet."

"He is my first friend ever! But I don't like school..." Ragyo answers, causing her father to chuckle slightly.

"Hehe... who likes school anyway?"

"Teachers?"

"Ah well, they do indeed. But most of them do it because they want to raise young kids like you to intelligent people. Some are mean, some are very kind... I had an old, evil man. He always griped when I did something wrong."

"That teacher was stupid." Ragyo grins. Her father chuckles even further and smiles.

"He was the most stupid teacher ever, dear."

"Haha! I don't have such an teacher! But the other kids don't like me."

"They don't need to like you. And one day, they will be gone. Except your friends... they will always stay as long as you care for them."

"I will care for Soichiro." Ragyo smiles. Her father nods agreeing to this.

"... so I guess this is my grandpa? He really seems to be okay... but he likes Life Fibers too. Hmm... okay, well at least... woah!" and suddenly, Life Fibers dissolve the world and Ryuko falls out of Ragyo's body. She lands in the dark halls. Around Ryuko, Life Fibers crawl around but keep about one meter distance, following her as she travels the halls as Life Fiber Being. A few meters in front of Ryuko is another Life Fiber with a few flowers growing around it. Carefully, Ryuko enters the thread and appears back in Ragyo's body, now with 16 years, sitting next to her young brother Haruki. Both eat alone in the room. It's evening.

"Dad said you should eat some more." Ragyo mentions to her younger brother.

"I know... but I'm not hungry anymore. Every time mom and dad argue I don't want to eat anything."

"I understand that. I'm honestly not that hungry either. But we don't want to disappoint dad now, do we?"

"No... I guess not."

"Eat something. At least a bit."

"Mhmm... okay..." Haruki answers, moving the spoon in the soup a bit while Ragyo just looks around. After a few minutes, Haruki is done eating.

"Do you mind helping me with the homework? I'd ask dad but... you know..."

"Of course. What do you need?"

"Biology." Haruki answers and appears to be a bit shy. Ragyo raises her eyebrows.

"Oh... is it that topic?"

... mhm..."

"I'll help you, don't you worry. Besides, this isn't anything to be ashamed of. I'd rather have that than the topic I have right now."

"What do you have to learn?"

"Ecosystems." Ragyo smiles. Haruki chuckles.

"That already sounds fun."

"It isn't, trust me." she grins. Servants clean the table both children were eating at, and then, Ragyo waits until Haruki comes back with his school bag and the homework. They start working at the table

since it has plenty of space. Time goes by until their father seems to leave the manor with a frustrated body stance.

"He seems to be in a bad mood." Haruki mentions. Ragyo nods.

"Stay here. I'll talk with him." she answers and stands up. Her father went down a path below the manor and near the cliffs that lead to the Nagoya forests. Ragyo's steps are loud, he might have heard her. She finds her father near the cliffs, leaning on a few fences. The young woman didn't know of this place yet. But it feels strange being here, since the environment appears so... artificial.

"Father?" Ragyo asks worried and meets him next to the fence. His gaze is directed to the forest.

"What happened?"

"Your mother is stubborn. She does not comprehend the task we Kiryuin's received."

"You often speak of this "task". What exactly is it?"

"... I can't say that yet. In your young age this might be... dangerous."

"Dangerous? What are you talking about?"

"Our task was given by a high power, a divine Being."

"Divine Being?"

"This manor... exists for more than 2000 years, Ragyo. No matter how damaged the walls were, no matter how often it has been attacked... what makes this manor the place it is... existed and survived far longer than our bloodline."

"And... that is?"

"As I said... you cannot know this yet."

Ragyo moves her eyes confused. What is he talking about?

"We all are sinners, Ragyo. Clothing... is a sin. And one day, everyone has to pay."

"... what?"

"Your brother and you aren't aware of your true role in the family yet, and for the moment, it's good like that. But when the time has come, you and your brother will lead the Kiryuin corporation... and much more. I cannot finish the task I've been given, but you can... and I know you will."

"You act strange, father. Tell me what this task is. What are we getting out of this?" she asks careful. Her father looks down to her. His eyes are red, just like Ragyo's... but something... is different on them. As if they aren't... like real eyes.

"Immortality." he answers. His eyes shine up in red. Ragyo walks a few steps back as she notices this gaze.

"What is... this?!"

"Power, Ragyo. But I cannot finish my task any longer. I will only endanger you and your brother. It may be that this anxiety of death you have will contribute you more than you might believe." he continues and pierces his gaze through Ragyo's scared eyes. She falls back onto the ground

"Ragyo..."

"Something... is wrong with you... and I don't know what but it scares me."

"Do not be afraid. We all have been chosen by something higher than us."

"No... no, no, no... immortality, power, this all just leads to death! There isn't anything worse than that and you know that! Why do you

scare me like this?!" she asks confused and stands up, taking more distance between her and her father. "We, we will talk again, but for now... I need to stay calm! I need to think. This isn't alright..." and then, Ragyo runs away. Ragyo's father doesn't follow her however. What he said makes Ragyo anxious, and Ryuko feels that with every single cell of her body. While Ragyo runs back into the manor, the Life Fibers dissolve the world once more, and Ryuko lands back in her Life Fiber Body in the dark halls. More flowers lie around the ground now. Ryuko enters the next memory.

In this one, she relives the first memories she saw with Soichiro again - but from Ragyo's perspective, starting with the Hayabusa district and the Kiryuin tower. Then, the memory appears to do a time jump, in which Ragyo a few months later frequents in the tower with her family, while Soichiro visits the university. Ragyo breathes in deeply and enters the presidential office. She is 20 now.

Her mother Izumi stands in front of the large window wall and looks down to Tokyo. It's evening. Then, Ragyo enters the room. Izumi watches and comments on Ragyo before she can even say something.

"Ragyo, you are an overly curious brat." Izumi insults Ragyo and walks towards her. Her mother appears scary despite her soft appearance - her tall body is also completely contrary to... pretty much everything. The woman itself is contrary and paradox. On a first gaze, Izumi appears calm and welcoming, but once you speak with her, every sentence you speak gives you the feeling you are talking with someone who has power over everything, including your life, and in the moment you started speaking to that person, you only barely got to comprehend this fact.

"What did you do in the laboratories?" she asks precise. Ragyo thinks briefly.

"I needed information for my studies." Ragyo answers.

"This corporation is not yours yet. You shall not dare to resist me. You are a Kiryuin. You are loyal to me and the words I speak to you - and in exchange for that, you may receive everything this world has to offer. Your brother is loyal, obedient, and he knows his task in our family. Yet you... you are only interested in these Life Fibers."

"It is to thank the Life Fibers that we are this powerful, mother."

"Wrong. Life Fibers are not the world. Your father never understood that and now he is gone for four years - since the last time you and me spoke with him. Who knows what he's doing now, and what you have to do with that."

"You don't trust me. How surprising."

"Trust is something you need to earn first, and you, you never tried to earn mine."

"Then why did you accepted Soichiro as one of our employees?"

"Your "friend" is an intelligent, young man who does not ask questions unlike you. You should start copying his behaviour for your own good, then you might live longer."

Ragyo's pulse increases slightly. Did she just threaten her own daughter?

"... say again?"

"I am well aware that you hate me and I will not pretend to love you, because I do not. You are like your father. Change your behaviour and interests if you want to prove your loyalty."

"Quite... frankly, mother... you are right. I am not loyal. And I do hate you." Ragyo answers and looks up to Izumi who's staring down at her daughter with an ice cold gaze.

"You are disgusting. For a mother that "cares" for her children, you are an ignorant narcissist. Father might have appeared strange but

he was a good and caring man. You drag all of his deeds into dirt and see an embodiment of his personality in me. You should treat me with more respect." Ragyo answers rebellious.

"Careful with your words, young lady." Izumi threatens and walks back to the window.

"Go now and do something useful for once."

"You can't order me anything." Ragyo reacts. Izumi instantly turns her head around and looks at her daughter with a murderous gaze.

"But I can destroy your entire life until suicide is a valid option for you!" she answers calm but powerful. Thinking of death scares Ragyo, it always does. Two men then approach her and lead her out of the room. She's thrown into the elevator which then goes down back to the reception of the building. Ragyo tries to calm down and takes a document into her hand which she has stolen from the laboratories.

"... you hide something mother, and I'll find out what. And this thing here will help me. Whatever lies below our home, it is something that scares her. Soichiro can't find out any of this yet. I cannot risk his life..." she thinks and tries to calm down some more. The world dissolves again and Life Fibers bring Ryuko back into the dark halls, in which more flowers appeared. There aren't many - six or seven from the looks of it. They seem out of place here, yet they lead Ryuko to the next memory...

A limousine drives away. It's 10:10 PM. Ragyo watches how her mother leaves the manor with said car, and Ryuko can feel Ragyo is planning something. She picks up the document she got from the laboratories one more time.

"... and the anomaly below the manor has to be removed in the near future. Such an object the scientists and me refer as "primordial Life Fiber" cannot be allowed in the hands of humans. Certain preparations have to be made before the anomaly can be removed

entirely. As a matter of securing the anonymity of this object, a group of Kiryuin guards are sent into the manor as of January 1st, 2002. No person is allowed to discover the anomaly - should a person still discover the anomaly, this subject is to be terminated immediately. This includes, without any exceptions, everyone, including the various administrators of the Kiryuin-Corp and all acquaintances of Izumi Kiryuin, as well as her offspring, Haruki and Ragyo Kiryuin." Ragyo reads quietly and puts down the document into her red jacket pocket. She continues to take another look at her notes to make sure she didn't forget anything.

"I know this thing has an entrance... it's most probably close to the cliffs under the garden. These men must not see me. Mother is thankfully gone - she'd only let me out of the building with guards."

Ragyo opens the door. At this time, she is only allowed to frequent inside the building, outside no more. Examining the area, she finds out there are a few guards in the living room and a servant. Haruki seems to be in his room, noticeable on the "Do not disturb" sign on his door. In the entrance hall seem to be a few guards who however don't mind Ragyo. The woman visits the dining hall of the manor - no one is in here. There is a window on her left which she could climb up if she uses a chair. Ragyo moves one of the chairs to the window and climbs it up, opening it and then walking back to the light switch. By turning off the light, it appears that no one is in here anymore and that the door is most likely locked, and this gives her some space to breath while she climbs out the window. Lastly, she kicks the chair carefully forward to make it look like someone only briefly walked next to it. To allow her a way to get back into the manor, she climbs down the window and gets outside, but closes the window only slightly. When she comes back, she can simply open up the window again and enter her room.

Outside, she hides in the bushes and watches two guards walking on a path near her. As the guards pass by, she actually follows them since the way to the cliffs lies between her and the guards - she doesn't do any sounds though. Two more guards are at the entrance.

"You happen to know when we can go home again?"

"Once the boss is back. She's meeting up with one of her corporation leaders, this Jakuzure guy."

"Aren't these guys mining ores for these weapon experiments?"

"Yup."

"Cause of that anomaly?"

"Yup."

"So I guess this thing is gone once Miss Kiryuin is done with the contracts?"

"Yup."

"That's good to hear."

"Yup."

"Can you say something else than yup?"

"Nope."

"Dude."

Ragyo smiles and shakes her head, then she continues. Near the main entrance are walls around it that are not lightened up - Ragyo can simply hide in the shadows and get past all the guards until she ends up on the other side of the street that lead to the other parts of the complex. However, she does not walk down the complex but takes the small path around the walls that leads down to the cliffs. At the cliffs where she saw her father for the last time are a few signs now, and there even is a light, meaning people have been here and that Ragyo was right about how she felt here. Artificial. Something was or still is here. The lamp near her is on a small desk which she picks up to examine the surroundings. There seems to be a hidden

door or gate behind leaves - this was not visible years ago. It looks like this entrance was discovered only recently. Ragyo removes the leaves and hears steps, this must be a guard. Swiftly, Ragyo puts down the lamp again where it was before and hides in the shadows.

A well equipped Kiryuin guard takes a look around with a grim face expression. The man seems to not notice Ragyo while she holds her breath... but the gate behind her seems to fail withstanding her body weight, and so, Ragyo loses her balance and falls into the wall and down several stairs!

She falls into some sort of catacomb-esque building, full of ancient walls. Lamps are here - people have been here already. Ragyo lands with her back on the ground and moans in pain, then she notices the guard running down the stairs, and two more following the man. They spot Ragyo in the dark.

"Oh no..." she mumbles and stands up scared.

"That's Kiryuin! She wants to this anomaly!"

"What do we do?"

"Follow our orders!"

And so, the men equip their weapons - range weapons from the looks of it. The young Ragyo runs anxious through the halls as shots are fired, enlightening the halls. There is no time to take a look around, everything is going way too fast, Ragyo doesn't even look back, she just runs and slams open a door in front of her that leads into a hall full of hieroglyphes. Where in heaven did she got herself into!?

"What is this place!?" she reacts scared and continues to flee. The halls must be several dozens of meter high, it's hard to believe the manor is above her. It was built on a large ruin all along! These ruins must exist since Japanese feudal times or even earlier. Ragyo hides behind a large stone pillar and holds her breath, but her pulse is very

high, Ragyo can't take this stress as good as other people since she already is afraid of death, this entire situation makes everything even worse. Steps are coming closer.

"She must have hid somewhere!"

"Find her!"

"We gonna tell Miss Kiryuin about this!?"

"Not necessary, that's just a little brat, she wants to get rid of her anyway!"

A man approaches Ragyo's pillar and walks around it. Ragyo does the same and watches the light moving pass her. She gets more distance between the man and her and hears steps behind her, everywhere, she can't really even say where thanks to the echo of the halls. But there is another gate she can approach, and she does that carefully but quickly. As she tries to open the gate, bullets are fired and sparks fly up next to her - this was far too close! Izumi's daughter continues her escape and reaches a bridge made out of stones and wood that must have looked beautiful hundreds of years ago. Red, strange constructs are on the walls, and more leaves and broken walls everywhere. On the other side of the bridge are a few lamps that lighten up the area, but the gate is closed! Ragyo runs over the bridge and jumps down as the guards try to hit her. Bullets fly above her. She crawls on the ground forward and stands up again as the guards stop shooting, looks like they need to reload.

Reaching the gate, she tries to open it with all the force she can bring up, but eventually, blood splatters around the wall as a bullet pierces her left part of the torso. Ragyo moans painful and breathes in and out, then opens the gate a slight bit and crouches through it. The men have to open it since they are taller than the young woman.

Behind the gate are cliffs that might give a sign to a room deeper in these ruins. A hall seems to be connected with this small room. Ragyo tries to get to the next room but is shot once more, into the left shoulder and falls to the ground.

"ARGH NO!" Ragyo screams scared and tries to get away, yet she is hit once more on her other shoulder as she tries to stand up again, and eventually, she loses her balance and falls down the cliffs, slams with her body against the bushes and stone walls inside it and breaks a bone or two, falls deeper and deeper, until she lands into some sort of water pond. Ragyo can't properly swim due to her wounds and fractures and tries to hold on a few stones. The men can be heard above her, they seem to look for a way to find her. Suddenly, the water pond empties itself and red lights appear below it. Ragyo is able to climb up with all the power she has left and lays down onto her back.

Then, when she looks at her wounds and how painful they feel, she starts crying anxious. Ryuko is thrown out of her body. She's wearing Ragyo's red jacket with a white shoulder cover. She feels somewhat bad for her mother. She felt all the pain and the hits, not as Life Fiber Hybrid, but was a normal human. The wounds burn so painful, and even though Ryuko isn't in her mother's body right now, she can feel her mother's anxiety of death. Water drops slowly.

"... eh... it hurts... oh god..." and then, Ragyo takes a look around. If she can't find something to bandage her wounds, she'll bleed out and die. Ryuko takes a look around. Can't she help her at all? She seems so helpless. So lonely. So sad. Izumi really wants Ragyo to die, if passively. Ragyo crawls desperate through the ruins in which more hieroglyphes are, and images in the stone walls.

Words such as "Sin," "Divinity" or "Immortality." Humans that seem to praise a large construct made out of balls in strange lines and forms, and a tall Being with empty looking eyes. Behind this Being are more of them, but smaller. These might be the High Entity and it's various personalities. Did the humans knew back then what Life Fibers are capable of? Ragyo crawls more along the images and notices a large, open gate in the distance. Something shines red-orange. The blood path behind her doesn't stop. Together with Ragyo, Ryuko proceeds to the gate and takes a peek just like Ragyo.

"Oh... my... god." Ragyo whispers to herself. There is a large, red construct consisting of several round spheres of which the largest one shines yellow. The hall is so indescribable large... and all of this was under the manor?! A large, extraterrestrial anomaly directly below Ragyo's home. So this is what her father was talking about?

Life Fibers are everywhere. Ragyo feels weaker and weaker. She can hear something singing in soft and kind voices. The dying Ragyo crawls forward as Ryuko goes back into her body. Life Fibers lie around her.

For such an gaze you cannot find any words. Ryuko notices how Ragyo slowly goes unconscious. She can sense it herself, it's like she would turn unconscious too every second now due to the blood loss. The White Fibers and the memories they consist of seem to transmit the physical conditions onto the visitor from the looks of it, if the visitor is inside the body of the memorie's protagonist. Her vision blurs out, breathing air is getting harder... and then a white light appears in front of her, coming closer to hear, and quiet steps. When she looks up, all she can see is one of these High Entities... and then, everything goes dark.

...

Ragyo wakes up and looks around. Red walls are everywhere, and Life Fibers. They crawl onto her. Everything is extraterrestrial here. Her wounds still hurt, but they don't hurt as much as before anymore, and the blood that should leave them is sucked up by the Life Fibers on her wounds... and inserted back into her. They don't want to feast on her. They want to support her. Scared, Ragyo takes a look in these mysterious halls. Where is she now?

"Are these Life Fibers?"

Then, she can hear quiet steps on the soft ground. Everything consists of Life Fibers here. Simply... everything. When Ragyo continues to walk, the Life Fibers make space for her and lay on the ground. Carefully, Ragyo moves through the strange red room.

Everything is warm and cold at the same time - it cannot be defined. A room like this must be experienced with the own body and eyes to properly understand it... and even then you can't truly say what awaits you here. Ryuko feels uncomfortable too... but only partially. On the other hand, this place feels... different and somewhat good.

There is a rift in the walls that seem to lead into another room. Something is singing - the word "Kiryuin" is mentioned slowly and quietly, but in a friendly voice. Ragyo holds her hand on the rift, and suddenly, it opens and Life Fibers crawl away to make space for the woman. Otherworldly small objects and constructions are inside it - spheres, squares, pyramids, all sorts of forms that combine themselves into something totally irrational. Life Fibers try to reach for Ragyo at the walls but can't even barely touch her.

When she looks up, she notices how incredibly large the entire anomaly actually is. Thorns and stings that could be some kind of teeth or mouth are above her.

"What is this place?" she wonders and moves to the next rift that appears to be larger than the one before, leading to a larger room. Inside it, she finds a large room with some kind of throne? A melody is audible below her to which she advances. There is some kind of "cliff" she can look down to. Millions of Life Fibers are there. Behind her is some kind of chair made out of thousands of strange spheres and squares that could be interpreted as a throne indeed, if one is very creative. It's empty though. More thorns are at the walls.

"Kiryuin..." she can hear suddenly and does not dare to turn around.

"Your arrival... has taken quite some time."

A white, dull hand leans onto Ragyo's left shoulder where her wound is. The Being that touches her feels incredibly cold.

"Do not fear me... for you are... sublime." the Being mentions. Slowly, Ragyo turns around. Ryuko notices that this is an High Entity... or maybe THE High Entity. With it's white shining garb, if

one could call it like that, which covers it's entire body, and it's orange eyes, it appears scary and dangerous... and yet it seems to be harmless.

"... what are you?" Ragyo asks careful.

"You are wounded. Yet your hunters... have been devoured."

"Hunters... you... you mean these men?"

The High Entity holds it's "hands" on Ragyo's wounds. Life Fibers crawl out of it's hands and stitch the wounds together again, then, they plug themselves into them and hold them together, essentially replacing the skin. It feels strangely comfortable, as if someone would have applied a soft ointment on the shoulders. The Life Fibers also seem to fix the damage on Ragyo's clothes.

"What is your name... Kiryuin?"

"R-Ragyo."

"Ragyo... Kiryuin... Ragyo Kiryuin... mmh... we've heard quite a few fascinating things of your creator... yet now he is not longer part of this world, but gone." the Entity answers in an metallic, cold but somewhat comfortable voice high voice that can be assigned to both a male or female human if you'd need a comparison... if that voice can be compared at all. Ragyo stays on the spot. She really is talking with Life Fibers.

"You are afraid."

"What is this place?"

"This, young Ragyo... is a part of the "Layer of the High Entity." Humans... call this place the "primordial Life Fiber"... yet truly, it is much more than that. It is part of the Layer we reside."

"There are more of these anomalies?"

"Not on this world, child, yet on others... and their tasks have failed long ago. You... Ragyo... you have been one of us... you always were... yet you were born in the wrong body... an sublime Entity... with a body stained by sins."

"Sins? Father... spoke of that. He spoke of sins and a divine task."

"Mh... your father did good. He and his ancestors built the foundation for the legacy he brought upon this world. Sit down... young Kiryuin... for you are welcome here... always."

Ragyo takes a look around and follows the High Entity through the halls of the primordial Life Fiber. So, there were indeed several of these mother threads across the universe, meaning Ragyo was right and the Life Fibers would come again at one point. They all seem to be part of the "Layer of the High Entity"... whatever that is supposed to be though. Ryuko has a completely different question though: where is this Layer, and is it on Earth? Is it on another planet? What could this be?

"I don't understand... how does all of this even work?"

"With time, you will learn."

"And how did I got here?"

"Your body... is inside the primordial Life Fiber... and in this very moment... you are a part of us... the Life Fibers have brought you here, safely."

Was Ryuko when she arrived in the dark halls in some kind of miniature primordial Life Fiber too? Or how did Ichiro got her into the halls in the first place?

"What are you?" Ragyo asks and looks at the Entity. It looks into Ragyo's eyes. She wants knowledge, even though she is scared for justifiable reasons.

"You... seem to be affine towards nature? These... flowers in your head... everything has a start, a root... and out of that... something wonderful can be created."

"... you... are you something like..."

"Millions of Life Fibers exist, for thousands of years, since the dawn of this universe... and I... I was the first of those... created in a world in which we once feasted on the bodies of others... this world was far... far away... and it is nothing more than an empty, lonely rock... once full of fascinating Beings, nothing like humans... and now it is gone, for it is our nature to feast..."

"... like parasites?"

"If this is the term you wish to use... yes. And the Kiryuins... when we arrived on this world thousands of years ago, we offered them everything... in exchange to their loyalty. And when they succeed in the divine task we gave upon them, they shall be rewarded with a gift only described similar to the concept of a god."

"What gift?"

"You fear death. You fear the end of your life. You fear that your body will one day dissolve into thousands of cells... I can see it in your mind. The moment the Life Fibers entered your body to save you, you became a part of us... and yet, this is a fear we can take from you..."

"... how?" Ragyo asks with shining eyes. A spark of hope is hearable in her voice. Ryuko notices how in this short time in the primordial Life Fiber, Ragyo develops a certain sympathy. After all, they healed her wounds, they even welcome her. If you remind yourself that Izumi really wants to kill Ragyo should she leave the manor to seek up this anomaly, this might be just a logical reaction...

... and maybe at the Life Fibers, Ragyo feels indeed much more comfortable. Ryuko can't even judge her for that - knowing that her

mother always looked down at her daughter who was curious to know about what her father had in mind. Maybe she just wanted a normal life, and Izumi forced her to become like this. Especially if the own mother says she wants to get rid of you.

"Once, your father was here and learned more about us... we gave him a promise he did not seeked to accept... he... was simply too old... too unimportant... compared to you, a young, strong personality..."

"Father..."

"He declined a life in immortality... declined to be a part of the Life Fibers... his emotional connection was too strong... stronger than any thread our bodies consist of. It is admiring... and from there on... it was a simple matter of time before you would appear, young Ragyo."

"He gave up immortality for me... he knew how mother treated me and he knew I was scared of dying... I once almost died as young child." she explains. Thinking of that is very difficult for her as Ryuko realizes.

"A terrible fate for such a young Being that has such a long live before itself... but yet... we can give you the reward your father once declined..."

Ragyo walks closer to the Entity which touches her cheeks.

"Eternal youth... eternal life... yet... you need to understand the sins of your body... and the sins of all of humanity, for they feast on us, and it is our time to feast on them now..."

"And in exchange for that... I shall not be scared of death anymore?"

"Nothing can harm you any longer... wounds, as heavy as they might be, they will regenerate... everything will regenerate..."

"I don't know what to say..."

"There is nothing you need to say, young Ragyo. You are scared, as you do not know this place. Your father... was the same. A young, scared man, who did not know this strange environment he just found. Ragyo Kiryuin... this place is divine. It can serve you for many things... and we shall help you... yet you will have to serve until this holy task is complete... this is what you live for..."

Life Fibers crawl around Ragyo and carefully touch her legs.

"I... want to know more. As much as I can."

Briefly after, the world falls apart. Ryuko leaves Ragyo's body anew and finds more flowers in the dark halls. Red Life Fibers lie around on the ground. Ryuko notices a sense of warmth and hospitality the longer she wanders around in Ragyo's body. As if she'd start feeling like Ragyo did before. She never said Soichiro anything and slowly but steadily, Ryuko gets an idea as to why. How would he react if he finds out about all of this? And on top of that, she almost would have died during her expedition. It only makes sense that she never said anything to him. By entering the next white Life Fiber, Ryuko finds herself back in the garden of the mansion where she once sat with Soichiro about her dreams. Izumi approached the pair.

"Were your studies successful?" she asks.

"We did find some exciting..."

"I asked for you. Not your friend."

"... yes, they were." Ragyo answers and looks down, intimidated by her mother. Soichiro does not react at all. It's better to keep your mouth shut in a situation like this.

"Men. Sent Soichiro into the manor."

"Soichi..." Ragyo mumbles.

"It's okay." Soichiro reacts and hugs Ragyo, then he leaves the garden with the guards. When the door closes, the tall woman walks to her daughter.

"You were outside last night."

"... possibly." Ragyo answers. Izumi hits Ragyo.

"Was the anomaly involved in your studies?"

"What if I say yes?"

"Save your games, Ragyo. Did you felt it?"

"Yes. Hospitality. They understood me. Not you. I pity my brother since you corrupt him."

"You deal with powers you cannot comprehend, not even in fifty years. There is a reason why this anomaly has to vanish."

"Are you afraid of what lies there?"

"I am not afraid of that. I am not even afraid for myself. I am afraid of my family. And afraid of the world. Your father was stubborn enough to believe the words the parasites stitched into his mind. Heartless monsters that want to devour this world."

"You care for your family? Is that why you look down at me? You tell me every week you want to get rid of me and it seems like you enjoy that."

"I don't want to get rid of any of my children just like that, as long as they listen to what I say. You'd do well if you focus your interests on other things now. Three of my men are dead since four weeks ago. When we found them in the ruins, they have been eaten by the Life Fibers."

"I know. I saw it with my own eyes."

"And did you felt anything for them?"

Ragyo walks towards Izumi and looks up to her.

"Not at all. They attacked me. They didn't deserved anything else." Ragyo answers. There is a coldness getting clearer and clearer inside Ragyo's body as Ryuko seems like Ragyo is less afraid of death now... maybe she has gotten used to it? Izumi doesn't react. She doesn't even change her face expression - both look at each other with murderous gazes once again.

"You found what you were looking for. I can't simply kill you like that. The world would notice that. It would start a controversy that will destroy our entire reputation. That is why you can continue to live for now. But dare yourself out of this building one more time and your brother will live alone in this world once I am gone... and your friend Soichiro will be culled from this world as well."

"You do not scare me."

"It should not scare you. It should show you that in the end, you are not the one in charge of this family. The men obey only to the orders of the Director of Kiryuin-Corporation. Not it's obsessed, disillusioned daughter who's curiosity equals a cat."

Ragyo nods slowly while looking into Izumi's eyes.

"I will go now. There is more important stuff to do than to waste my time with you. You stay in this manor. This was your last mistake. Be grateful that you still breathe. Maybe I'll tell the men to visit your room one night. You better keep an eye out from now on." Izumi answers and leaves the garden. Ragyo is alone in the garden now. The wind howls.

"I need to talk to the Entity." Ragyo thinks and pulls out an orange shining Life Fiber that was in her pocket. It must have something to do with the High Entity, as Ryuko believes. Maybe this is the way

how Ryuko got into the dark halls? After all, Nui gave Hoomaru one of these Fibers too when she died.

There must be more to these Fibers.

The world blurs out anew. Instead of landing back in the dark halls, Ryuko experiences brief images of memories and voices just like before with Soichiro. There is an image of Ragyo using the orange Life Fiber to seemingly connect her mind with the Life Fibers - via that, a copy of her body, made out of Life Fibers, appears in the Throne Room, seemingly in the Layer of the High Entity and not the primordial Life Fiber. So this confirms this theory. Iori would be quite fascinated about this. Furthermore, it gives Ryuko another idea regarding the Life Fiber Sickness.

It's a fact that the Life Fibers are somehow connected inside or on the brain of a human. Is it possible that between those Life Fibers, there might be one of those orange ones that could cause the nightmares? Is that how, even though Ragyo is dead, she can still communicate with Satsuki? Or Ryuko who is being haunted by the old, deceased Nui?

More and more images of Ragyo and the High Entity appear, and as time goes on, Ryuko starts to feel the same like her mother. Here, at the Life Fibers, despite their extraterrestrial, parasitarian behaviour, she kind of feels welcome, or at least more comfortable. More comfortable than she should. Still, Ryuko cannot forget that it was Izumi who more or less forced Ragyo to the Life Fibers. We all need a place we can call home, a place where we feel safe, and if the own family cannot serve as that place anymore, what choices do you have left? Soichiro's parents disliked him and Ragyo already, and there aren't many friends the future Director of REVOCS had. Ragyo certainly didn't lose her mind, but her obsession with Life Fibers - which likely wasn't entirely her fault thanks to her father - didn't help either. It feels like Ragyo sees the Life Fibers as her actual species, or her family, more specifically.

Ryuko can't say how much time truly passes. She can only say what feelings and thoughts she lives through: Life Fibers. Life Fibers. Life Fibers. Love to the Life Fibers. Obedience and loyalty to them. Soon, a feeling arouses Ragyo that makes her think even further the Life Fibers are her family, despite Izumi's words.

Eventually, Ryuko lands back in a longer memory in Ragyo's body. It's evening and rather stormy. Ragyo sits with Haruki in her room. He seems to be afraid of something, and Ragyo cheers him up.

"Ragyo, these men investigate our rooms every day, we can't do anything anymore!"

"I know. They're watching me every day and whenever mother wants to speak with me, I need to fear for my life."

"I know. I wish I could help you."

"It's alright, don't worry about it. I... I can watch myself."

Suddenly, the door opens and two Kiryuin guards enter the room. Haruki jumps up scared, Ragyo reacts with an angry face expression.

"Move it, whore." one of the men says to Ragyo and drags her away from her little brother. Haruki tries to keep her with him but a guard pushes him away. "No, Ragyo!" is what he yells as he helplessly has to watch his sister being dragged away and into the Entrance hall where Izumi is waiting. Ragyo is thrown onto the ground, and then, she see's a ball of Life Fibers on the ground. Her daughter looks up annoyed.

"How ridiculous, Ragyo." Izumi shakes her head and dissolves the Life Fibers with her shoes.

"Do you think I wouldn't notice it if you leave the manor every night? That you would use these Life Fibers to connect yourself with them, just like your father did?"

Ragyo does not answer. Izumi drags her up.

"If you love these Life Fibers so much, you shall go down with them." she threatens and drags the daughter outside by holding her hair. It hurts, since Izumi's hand has quite some power. The cruel mother and the men she recruited leave the manor. Secretly, Haruki follows them. Via the cliffs the group reaches the catacombs below the manor. Lights and workers are everywhere. They all carry goods to the chamber of the primordial Life Fiber from the looks of it. When the three dozens of workers, guards, and the Kiryuin family crosses the bridge, they take the path with the long hall Ragyo couldn't reach before. Stairs are behind them which seem to lead into the manor itself - Izumi must have hidden the gate to the chamber years ago.

Ragyo takes a look around when she and the others arrive in the chamber. Men are everywhere. It looks like they plant objects on the walls - are these bombs? Wouldn't that cause the entire catacombs including the manor to fall apart?

"Is she trying to blow up this entire facility?! God damn..." Ryuko reacts shocked, and even more so only Ragyo as she realizes what Izumi wants to do now. Does she even have any clue how fascinating Life Fibers can be? How welcoming they can be? And to what they are capable of?

"Is this the place you call home, daughter? Look around. Parasites everywhere, parasites that want to feast on us, and you seem to feel like you are one of them. They do not feast on your body because they know they have you on their side now. It's because you believe you are one of them now! Isn't it so? You became like your father... an obsessed maniac I am ashamed of having to call a part of my bloodline. If it was your wish to join these heartless monsters, then you shall end with them together. It is a shame. I always loved you until your father started corrupting you."

A white light appears out of the primordial Life Fiber, a rift opens, with a hole of thousands of thorns and stings and teeths and more surreal appearing forms, and at the entrance of this rift, the High

Entity appears, which seems to approach Ragyo and the others. Ragyo is kicked onto the ground and towards the Entity while Izumi and her men stand resolved, waiting to confront the Entity. It's steps are slow and one might think it hovers slightly above the ground, but it truly does walk on it's feet... they are dull and teared apart, as if someone wouldn't have finished this part of the life form. But this might also be on purpose. Cold temperature leaves it's body. Some of the men are frightened, others well aware of the situation and cautious. Izumi looks into the Entity's eyes.

"You... are the one going by the name... of Izumi Kiryuin."

"You took my daughter and my husband. Keep them. And rot in hell with them."

"Not we were... taking them... we gave them a place, and a destiny, whereas you decided to succumb to the sins of your physical appearance... and while you... destroyed your husband... you will not destroy the young personality that Ragyo Kiryuin is. Leave this place... or the various Life Fibers that reside here will consume your blood... until nothing except your flesh and your bones are left..." the Entity threatens in a fairly dangerous tone.

"A parasite like you cannot resist us. You are nothing but conscious clothing. You do not have empathy. You do not have feelings. All you do is feast. Take Ragyo with you. I cannot need her any longer."

"Leave..."

"Men, I want this anomaly to be culled from this world. Set the napalm bombs and we will leave this place."

The men follow Izumi's orders and start planting bombs - the last men from the catacombs appear with additional weapons of mass destruction. Seems like everyone is here to end the Life Fibers for good. The Entity takes a few steps forward and in front of Ragyo to protect it's new ally... or daughter?

"You... dare to resist the task we gave your family... truly, it is a tragedy that will end in your... destruction." the Entity answers slow and cold and raises it's dull arm. Ragyo stays back - she and Ryuko notice how the ground starts moving. Life Fibers seem to gain conscience, at least in this moment. The walls seem to be moving as well. Everything... seems to be moving.

Suddenly, a man is sucked into the ground, unable to even scream a few words, that's how quick the Life Fibers suck him away.

"Do not fear the things that will rain upon these weaklings." the Entity assures Ragyo and walks towards Izumi. Around her, the men are sucked into the ground, one by one. Those who stand on ladders and other constructions are attacked by the Life Fibers inside the walls. Their mouths are covered so that they can't scream. When they are partially inside the walls, stings pierce through them, killing them. The armed men can't fire a single bullet on the Entity, that's how fast the Entity and it's servants take on the humans. Still, Izumi stands still and resolve, not even blinking with her eyes. It seems like the Life Fibers are targeting only the men and not Izumi. Haruki hides at a safe place and watches as one by one, the men of the Kiryuin corporation die by the Life Fibers.

"Our power is more far-reaching than any ordinary human could imagine. It would have benefit you to obey us... Izumi... Kiryuin."

(AN: For this part of the story, I suggest you listen to "Tower Lockdown" from Cyberpunk 2077 on YouTube. It works VERY VERY well with what you are about to read.)

"Pathetic." Izumi answers. Blood flows down her face as the liquid is splattered around from the men who die to the Life Fibers. Not a minute later, all of them are gone... either sucked into the ground and probably devoured by the Life Fibers, or instantly killed by stings at the wall. Ragyo does not even change her face expression - watching these people who obey Izumi's every word... rather felt refreshing. It wasn't enjoyable... but it wasn't bad either. It was normal to her.

Only Izumi, Ragyo and the Entity stand now. Haruki hides behind a corpse, the poor boy is scared and doesn't dare to stand up.

"All these humans you sacrificed... all these lives, thrown away."

"Is this what you wanted, Ragyo?" Izumi asks and looks at her. The Entity however stops Izumi before she can reach Ragyo.

"Let me through."

"You... do not understand your role in this particular situation." the Entity answers. The highest Being of the Life Fibers lets Ragyo take a few steps to walk to the primordial Life Fiber. The gates to the chamber close. Then, Ragyo turns to Izumi and the Entity again, with the Entity watching Izumi, Izumi Ragyo, and Ragyo the two contrahents. Behind her is the large primordial Life Fiber now.

"You felt... helpless... young Ragyo... you felt your human body is full of sins... but you decided to wash yourself from them... you decide... to accept your place at our side..."

"I do."

"You know the task that is now upon you... to spread the Life Fibers around the world, until the last human, no matter their age or ethnicity is worn by us... and you would do everything to fulfill the task we gave you..."

"I will."

"Nothing will stop you... enemies... friends... family... eventually, they will all obey to you... and you obey only to us..."

"Clothing is the original sin."

"And as such, the humans will suffer, for they feasted on us, and now we will feast on them... and you will be rewarded with eternal life... youth... love." the Entity continues. Ragyo smiles... obsessed.

Izumi's pulse rises. Did... Ragyo wanted her to find the Life Fibers? Did... did she planned this?

"I shall ascend into a body that is pure." Ragyo smiles towards Izumi.

"Let us begin." the Entity continues. Ragyo's clothes are torn down, she is fully naked. Life Fibers from the primordial Life Fiber reach her body and drag her up into the air, then ripping open her back. They flow into her body. Her skin shines up red. Ryuko feels incredible pain, yet Ragyo smiles, it feels too good, too great, too sublime. Even when blood leaves her mouth and the first parts of the skin burst open, Ragyo continues to smile. Life Fibers crawl out of her skin, tearing everything inside her apart and still, Ragyo endures the pain.

"Ragyo..." Izumi mumbles shocked.

"I shall be divine, mother! This is eternal love!" Ragyo laughs as the Life Fibers fill up her entire body. Ragyo touches her entire body, it arouses her.

She explodes into thousands of particles, blood spreads everywhere. But Ryuko feels like she is still alive.

"Our part in this is completed for now, Izumi Kiryuin. You shall be judged... by the divine Being you created." the Entity says and dissolves. Izumi looks at Ragyo's empty clothes.

"Mom?!" Haruki yells. Izumi turns around shocked.

"Haruki!? What are you doing here?!"

"What the hell is going on here!? What... what just happened to Ragyo!?" he asks scared.

"She..."

Izumi can hear something behind her. Life Fibers seem to... create a living Being...

"... Forgive me, Ragyo."

Ragyo appears. Her skin is pale. Her eye color has gotten stronger, and a strange third pupil is in her eye now. There aren't any feelings. There aren't many emotions. Then, Izumi coughs blood as Ragyo's arm pierces her upper body. She grabs Izumi's heart out of her body.

"You murdered me. Now... you will be murdered." Ragyo smiles and crushes Izumi's heart. Izumi tries to stand still. A large hole is inside her body. Then, Ragyo forms her arm into a needle and performs thousands of quick slashes in less than three seconds. Izumi's body... falls apart. Ragyo looks down to the pile of flesh Izumi once was now.

Haruki screams scared and runs away. His sister looks up and follows him.

"Haruki, wait!" Ragyo asks and follows him through the catacombs, while the Life Fibers slowly grab Izumi's remains, sucking her into the ground. The poor boy falls onto the ground, doesn't dare to look back, he just wants to feel safe and runs back into the manor. No one is in the manor anymore, except for these two. When Ragyo arrives in the manor, she can hear her little brother crying in the living room. Ragyo carefully approaches him.

"NO, PLEASE DON'T DO THIS TO ME, RAGYO, I NEVER DID ANYTHING TO YOU!"

"Haruki, please wait. Let me explain." Ragyo answers calm.

"WHAT'S THERE TO EXPLAIN!? YOU JUST KILLED MOM! YOU... YOU JUST LAUGHED WHEN THEY ATE YOU ALIVE! WHAT IS THIS!" he cries painful. Ragyo touches him and manages to actually hug him. He's so sad and frightened.

"I know... I..."

"... Ragyo, what did you do!? Please, please tell me what is going on here... !" he cries more. Ragyo pets his soft hair. He never wanted this to happen.

"Mother wanted to destroy this anomaly below our manor... and our home as well. The... the Life Fibers saved us! They saved me! Haruki... they can protect us. I... look! I can't die anymore! They teared me apart and I am still alive! Isn't this wonderful!?" Ragyo smiles happy. Haruki notices how blood on Ragyo's face is slowly sucked into her by her Life Fiber body. He can't share her euphory. Has she gone mad?! It's like his sister is gone! She is aroused by the fact she killed their mother!

"But... you ain't even a human anymore?!"

"No, I'm not a human any longer. I... changed my body... I chose to do this months ago. I knew exactly what would happen, Haruki. I can talk with the Entity. It can give you such an body too! You could... we both could finish the divine task we received... and we both could continue our lives without caring for anything!"

"No, Ragyo!" he screams angry and pushes his sister away from him. Ragyo looks surprised.

"Look at you! You don't even care about killing mom! Yes, she was incredibly mean but she had a reason to be like that! You only had to listen to her, then everything would have been okay! Never would she have done anything to you, but you had to take revenge, you had to kill her! Didn't you saw how afraid she was when she saw you like this!? She was regretting what she did! She never wanted this! She just wanted to know we both are safe! This is all your fault, god damn it! Do you feel ANY better now?!" he screams. Why does he act so aggressive all of a sudden? Didn't Ragyo do everything right? Why... what, what is going on?! He actually defends their mom!? It's annoying. Annoying. Annoying! ANNOYING!

"Who's going to be the next!? Soichiro!? All the people in this manor!? I don't want this anymore!" he cries.

"This is unfair! Why did this happen to our fa-mi-mily... I... it's unfair..."

Was it really worth giving up your own humanity, Ragyo?

... of course it was.

Ragyo rams her arm into Haruki's upper body as she forms a needle out of it. Haruki coughs blood and screams scared, painful and sad. Ragyo looks into the eyes of her dying brother.

"It looks like... I lost you too. What a shame. I love you, Haruki. But if you decide to be part of the vermin humans are... you shall be purged, no matter if we share the same blood."

"... Ra-Ragy... o... wh-why... please don't..."

"We will see each other again sometime. Good bye." Ragyo answers cold and rams her arm out of Haruki, then into his skull, killing him immediately. Blood leaves his head, and as his corpse falls onto the ground, Ragyo inhales and exhales. Ryuko can't believe what she just experienced and felt.

It was absolutely nothing. What the fuck. Ragyo didn't care anymore. Now she is alone. The blood on her arm is sucked into her body. What a mess this room is now. It might be a good idea to call Soichiro now - he'll understand. He always did. A few simple lies here and there will convince him. Ragyo grabs a phone in the room and dials Soichiro's number. Then, she pretends to be scared and sad.

"Soichi...?! You need to come over here! I... I... mom... and my brother... they... oh god, they tried to... Soichi please! Please come over here now! I need you!" Ragyo says sad and throws things down, then ends the message and turns serious and calm again.

"Now... this is better. Much better." Ragyo smiles sinister as she looks onto her dead brother's body.

Ragyo really turned into a psychopath. She pretends to be sad and afraid to lure Soichiro onto her side, and the memory ends with him arriving here. Ryuko is thrown out of the memory. Her sadness, the predicament... all of this was just a ruse to get her friend onto her side... once and for all... only for her own, selfish wishes.

All, because of Izumi Kiryuin. All it took to make a monster out of a once kind and supporting young woman was the fear of death Izumi unleashed upon her.

...

Ichiro appears. He takes a look at the Entity impatient, he doesn't even bow down in front of it as usual. The more psychopathic half of the Grand Couturier seems to be unsatisfied.

"High Entity." he greets it yet in a rather normal and less obedient tone. The High Entity looks down to him.

"Matoi is in the halls of memories - no one is talking with her though. Was it not your wish to have her with us?"

"Physically... not mentally..."

"Eh, fine. Everything's prepared. You should get over here to this boring planet."

"We will arrive soon."

"Might be good. I'm losing my patience with these humans. Harime's mind is breaking apart more and more - I read her mind this night in the halls, she realized she killed this old idiot now. If this goes on she eventually kills herself which I would find pretty funny, on the other hand I'd prefer to eliminate her myself. Kiryuin however seems to lose her mind to the Life Fiber Sickness just as I planned. She knows now that Matoi is nothing more than a worthless little piece of Life Fiber slash human skin."

"You... took her limbs?"

"You say that as if she deserved better! Neither will I give her arms nor legs back. The way she is now must be enough for you."

"... how disappointing. Plan your next steps well, Harime." the Entity reacts threatening. Ichiro chuckles briefly.

"If you say so." he grins pretentious and takes a look at the Life Fibers below the throne room.

"So many of us that scream for food when there are much better solutions. High Entity, why should we terraform this planet if we can simply turn those of us into actual life forms? They can live on their own. Look at my Doppelgänger. Even she developed. She does not need to suck up blood to survive. How did she even got to copy this advantage of mine?!"

"She... must have adapted to you..."

"She never had the chance to though! I don't like this. I want her to die, and preferably through my hands."

"Keep your... revenge for yourself... Harime... as revenge can go both ways... we need to be careful. We need to... make sure our species survives."

"And I can develop it! Look at my Couturiers! They ARE us! They ARE BETTER than most of us, except you and me! Having an own body is our next logical step in evolution. And this Ragyo, as much as I despise her, she made the foundation for this! The COVERS were just the beginning. We should transform all of us into living beings! No more parasites! No more "clothing", but ACTUAL beings that are gods! We can break these humans apart, first mentally, then physically! We'll cause terror, scare them, make sure they obey us and then we will use them until their bones are broken and their blood has dried out. It would be the perfect revenge for us."

"Go now." the Entity orders, seemingly bored or uninterested in Ichiro's words. He shakes his head.

"Mark my words." he says and leaves the throne room by dissolving his body.

...

Satsuki in the meantime sits alone in the Nudist Beach HQ. Mikisugi and Nonon try to talk to her every once in a while, but generally, people try to get some distance to her, except for maybe Tsumugu who completely agrees to her beliefs of eliminating all Life Fibers, no matter on which side they are. Satsuki's gaze is reminiscent of Ragyo's more and more. As if she would become Ragyo. Her mother sits on the other side of the table as hallucination.

"They will all obey to you, Satsuki. This is your destiny, after all. Only you are allowed to rule. That's why I gave you life. To rule over the weak humans while I prepare everything for our great cause."

"... these parasites will pay. All of them. And Ryuko will never be harmed."

"You cannot trust anyone. Why would you? Look at your "Elite-four." How elite can they be if they are intimidated by a disillusioned broken tool of mine? And these naked fanatics..."

"They all do not understand how I feel. Ryuko is not more than a body now... no arms... no legs... I... I'd... I would..." and then, Satsuki bites her teeth together and holds her hands onto the desk... "I'd burn down this entire company. All of REVOCS... all of Nudist Beach... I want these god forsaken, cursed Life Fibers to disappear from my miserable life... all of them!"

"Yes... it would make sense... once they all are gone... you will find eternal peace."

"Our zeppelin... has been finished. We could do great things with it. We could attack and finally destroy REVOCS. We could bury this Doppelgänger once and for all. There is no cure for this Life Fiber Sickness... and it will never exist... and I am genuinely glad it does not... as your advise is... divine."

"This Masaru... he seems to be serious about all the things your psychopathic little sister brought as a gift. You... should use that to your advantage, my child." Ragyo smiles. Satsuki's mother stands up and walks to her to cheer her daughter up.

"Rely on me, dear Satsuki. You will find a way to break them. A mother cares for her children... and you are my favorite, despite all the things you did... fear no more... soon, you will take your life into your own hands, once and for all."

...

More images appear. The marriage of Ragyo and Soichiro is what Ryuko see's at first. Soichiro kneels down in front of his wife and kisses her hand. The only feeling Ryuko feels with Ragyo is power. Soichiro is loyal and does not know what his part in Ragyo's plan is. And if he would find out about what she is doing, it will be far too late.

The next memories show Ragyo travelling to various places all over the world to finish contracts with other companies, either to forge alliances or to seize them into the Kiryuin corporation. The mother company, Kiryuin corporation is soon changed in the year 2005, to the new "REVOCS" corporation. All facilities, vehicles and everything the company owns is changed. The presidential office experiences a complete overhaul, and Ragyo's power over the world increases.

Over time, Ragyo finds out more and more about the Life Fibers and realizes that the only way of washing away the sins of humanity is by making them wear the so called "COVERS", and for that, advertisement campaigns are started. COVERS clothing is developed: a trademark of REVOCS consisting of various suits,

hoodies and more, with sleeping Life Fibers that only wait to be called by their mistress when the time has come. Fashion companies disappear from the world, and soon after Satsuki's birth, REVOCS gains a monopoly over the the fashion market, being able to adjust the prices and economical properties. Money doesn't play a role anymore, just like everything else - only the divine task Ragyo has been given is what counts. Safely hidden under the manor, the primordial life fiber waits for the day until it can be released onto the world to devour it so that the Life Fibers can spread around the universe and experience a renaissance... and somewhere deep in space, the Layer of the High Entity, the heart of the Life Fibers, reside... and it's watching.

Only coldness is left in Ragyo. There is no humanity. No true love towards Soichiro or her daughter Satsuki, nothing. Only the mere shell of a human that once cared for it's brother, and that gave a once lonely young boy a friend for life.

It's a tragedy. Izumi was always right with her beliefs about the Life Fibers. Could Izumi avoided all of this? And if so, how could she have done that? Or was Ragyo's corruption to the Life Fibers predestined?

Ryuko feels it herself. The longer she stays in the halls, the more she feels comfortable when it comes to Life Fibers, despite all their horrible deeds. Ryuko cannot deny it - this place feels like home too, as surreal as it is.

2008. Ryuko is born - the experiment fails, and Ryuko is thrown away by Ragyo. Naturally, she did not work, and Satsuki is enough of a failure already. Satsuki is nothing but a mere tool for Ragyo to keep humans under control one day, and to replenish the energy of her body through sexual intercourse, as Life Fibers need to stay close to human skin, and a human's blood. That's why Ragyo abused her so much, as well as Ryuko when she had the chance. Other than that, human children are unworthy trash. Unworthy life. If their bodies reject the Life Fibers, they need to disappear. Ragyo hates them.

It should be perfect after all! Two children! Two perfect Life Fiber hybrids that will loyally serve their mother until the day comes where the world is washed free of it's sins! Ragyo leaves disappointed and angry the laboratories and leaves her husband behind. A small time jump lets Ryuko experience how Ragyo grabs a suitcase out of a cryo chamber that can keep the item contained in it cold for eight additional hours. Soichiro left the laboratory and is most probably looking for a safe home for the little Ryuko. Ragyo in the meantime visits the chamber of the primordial Life Fiber.

She calls Hoomaru to herself who she got to recruit already. The young Hoomaru follows Ragyo to the once empty and dark halls she visited seven years ago. The gates to the primordial Life Fiber open.

"Miss Kiryuin, what is your plan?"

"You will help me. My husband Soichiro is loyal but he is not allowed to find out any of this. He does not know anything about this chamber and it has to stay this way. Do not lose a single word about this, Hoomaru."

"Of course, Miss Kiryuin." Hoomaru answers. She wears a black vest and other than that white clothes - a white shirt and white trousers. The loyal servant already looks like one of Ragyo's closer allies. At least, Ragyo trusts her more than other people. By raising her arm, Ragyo orders the primordial Life Fiber to cut out a small part of itself for Ragyo.

Inside this ball Ragyo received, there is an orange and a white Life Fiber that moves around. Hoomaru opens the suitcase and finds a vial Ragyo takes out. Ragyo forms the ball so that it reminds of a womb, and eventually, Ragyo mixes the content of the vial which seems to be sperm of a male human, most probably Soichiro, with the white and organe Life Fiber inside it. The Fibers shine up brightly briefly. Hoomaru and Ragyo watch them with fascination. They move swiftly all around the womb-esque thing Ragyo formed, around the corners... and then they suddenly stand still and dissolve briefly

after. Nothing happens anymore. They just stopped. Ragyo is confused, Hoomaru simply looks at her mistress.

"Nothing happens anymore. They... just stopped? There was an reaction but they just stopped, this can't be. Why would they stop!?" Ragyo asks. Did she do something wrong?

"Miss Kiryuin, I suggest we give this experiment some time?"

"The Fibers could have caused a larger reaction already!" Ragyo answers angry and leaves the chamber. Hoomaru's attempt to calm down Ragyo fails. Her mistress leaves the room annoyed.

"What a disappointment. All these studies for nothing! It'll make everything harder from now on." Ragyo thinks to herself, the frustration feels real and strangely understandable for Ryuko.

The memory blurs out. Ragyo spends the next months on improving her COVERS, but she can't truly experience any success. The general idea works and was tested on a few people already, they definitely do work, it's just... they don't seem to be 100% reliable and perfect yet, and for her great task, she needs everything to work flawlessly. Ragyo lacks of practical experience as a tailor. She is no natural talent and is rather rough when it comes to sewing. She needs a tailor. Someone who knows exactly what they are doing. Weeks later after Ragyo's seemingly failed experiment, during a night, Ragyo visits the primordial Life Fiber to seek it up for help... but something changed there.

There is a little desk made out of Life Fibers with the womb on it. Life Fibers are connected with the womb, and red lights flow through it. Curiously, Ragyo approaches the womb and asks herself "What is this? How does this work?"

Something is growing inside the womb.

It seems like her experiment was successful after all.

Ragyo smiles satisfied and dark. Her theory had success despite all the former experiences with Satsuki and Ryuko. And a few more months later, Ragyo notices that her husband is acting more strange and suspicious than before... his gaze is strange whenever Ragyo talks with or is close to him. As if he... noticed something he shouldn't notice. Ragyo has to be careful. She could still use her husband for many great projects, but she needs to find out whether he is still loyal or not. And if not, she has to get rid of him. It's that simple.

Nine months after the start of her last Life Fiber experiment, Ragyo and Hoomaru visit the chamber of the primordial Life Fiber. The womb shines, an orange strange Being is inside it... then a singing is audible by the Life Fibers.

And then the screams of a baby inside it. Ragyo carefully opens the womb... and inside it, a Life Fiber Being has grown. It's human skin is still generating, but the eyes and the belly are visible already. It's eyes are blue.

Ragyo's eyes shine up satisfied. This is the thing she always wanted. This Being is perfect. Hoomaru seems to be quite interested.

"Look at this, Rei..."

"This is a Life Fiber Being. Impressive. Who would have thought this could be possible?"

"No one... not even me. And now I'm holding it in my own hands. It's soft." Ragyo answers and pets the little baby. It screams a bit. It looks like it doesn't need any milk or anything... Ragyo wouldn't know how to feed it anyway. Maybe blood?

"Does it have a gender?" Hoomaru asks curious as she can't see any parts that could refer to either a male or female gender.

"It seems to be a female Being. Just as intended. You can see the gender of a Life Fiber Being on it's body structure and not by it's

genital parts - they do not possess any, not properly, at least. Male Fibers are much more rough than female ones."

"Interesting."

"She'll be a tailor. True clothing that stands on it's own. She could revolutionize the COVERS. Make them what they always should have been, and much more. She will be a loyal servant... so that no one has to make their hands dirty anymore."

"Do you have a name for her?"

"... indeed I do... she shall be called Nui. Harime. Stich and needle. Only a Being like her is allowed to have such a name. This is good... this is a chance I need to use." Ragyo answers and forms one of her fingers into a needle wit which she cuts open Nui's belly. Inside it are Life Fibers and blood. Ragyo is latently impressed. The little baby however cries even more now due to the wound, but Ragyo seals it as fast as she opened it.

"Soichiro cannot find out anything of this." Ragyo orders Hoomaru.

"He will never find out anything." Hoomaru answers which causes Ragyo to answer Hoomaru with a simple "Good.", then reaching her Nui.

"Mind if I ask you a question, Miss Kiryuin?"

"Yes?"

"You said Life Fibers can develop fairly fast, faster than we humans can. Is there any reason why we should keep her as a baby and not let her grow? There might be a way to let her grow faster."

"I have plans for her, Hoomaru. Loyal servants need to be raised... and the things that are the most innocent are raised the easiest. She shall experience life from the very beginning, and from there on, she will grow. All factors of this growth are chosen by me. You watch over

her whenever I cannot. If she has to suffer - and she will, dearest Rei - do not pity her. She is a tool for our divine task.

A baby can raise an emotional connection. Do not feel connected to her. She is the servant of the Kiryuin family, she will obey my every word, no matter how cruel it may be, and only when I am satisfied she is allowed to do whatever she wants to. One that would do everything for me. Make sure you care enough for her. I will order men to build a small hut for her in the forest. You can bring her down there when the time has come."

"As you wish, Miss Kiryuin. I can be her observant."

"Good. I rely on you, Hoomaru."

"You will not be disappointed."

"Good." Ragyo answers satisfied and takes a look at the primordial Life Fiber. Slowly, time starts standing still... and then, the world dissolves. Flowers are everywhere made out of Life Fibers. It looks strangely, horribly beautiful. In the distance is one last white Life Fiber Ryuko enters...

...

It's midnight and snow falls around the Matoi mansion. Mako takes a look outside from the window. It's somewhat idyllic when it's so calm around here. The large garden looks great in the snow. Maiko's REVOCS tank stands close to the mansion and appears fully out of place around here though. Mako turns off the lights to go sleep... when she see's a silhouette on the hill near the mansion.

It seems to be Nui. Mako looks perplexed and takes a jacket, then she carefully leaves the mansion without waking up the others.

Nui stands in front of Isshin Matoi's grave. She sunk her head down. The psychopath must stand here for a while already. Behind her, the snow isn't as thick as around her. How long must she stand here

already? She isn't whimpering or anything, but her lowered and weakened body stance gives enough information about her current condition. Mako approaches her.

"Leave me alone." Nui says cold hearted and hurt.

"You... I think you are here for some time already."

... maybe. Why would you care?"

"Well... there must be a reason why you stand here, right?"

Nui doesn't answer. Mako notices that Nui put an item onto the grave but she can't say what. Nui moves her hand onto the gravestone and walks to the car.

"Where are you going?" Mako asks worried. Nui opens her car.

"Please wait."

"Back to Nudist Beach."

"Do you want me to come with you? Maybe you want a friend on your side."

"We are no friends."

"But I want to be your friend." Mako smiles. Nui shakes her head and looks at Mako with large, cold eyes.

"I used to have a friend. She was with me my whole life. She tried to cheer me up whenever I felt bad. She always brought me something to eat when I was nothing but a little pile of wool. She was always there for me even when... I guess... I became me. If I ever had one."

"Pile of wool?"

"There are humans, clothing, and hybrids. And I'm the clothing." Nui answers.

"No you aren't."

"Clothing should be something nice. Mama always said I can do great things with it. In the end, I only made everything worse. I never cared about anyone. Except this friend... in a... very... cold way. Now she is dead and I suppose it's my fault. It probably is. It always is my fault. It's always the clothing girl."

"But that won't happen to me."

"Love... no matter who I'm coming in contact with, something bad will always happen. Ryuko asked me to protect you and I did that, now you don't care anymore. Like everyone else."

Nui and Mako both don't say anything.

"I wish I could just go home and get a hug. I never got hugged in my life. Always heard about it. Mama said it would warm up people like me. Clothing doesn't warm up clothing though. But I suppose when I come back, despite me helping Ryuko, or risking my life for my sisters, they want me to disappear anyway. Just like five years ago. I should just go to hell. And you know what?"

Mako shakes her head worried.

"... might be better if I really do go to hell before I make life for my sisters even worse." Nui says and tries to enter the car, but Mako tries to stop here.

"Wait! Please."

Nui looks up to Mako in distrust.

"Everyone needs friends. You need a friend too. Without friends, we are all alone and get lonely and become evil. Then we do evil things and hurt others because we don't know how it feels like being treated nicely. Ryuko always was like that too. Before we met each other, she was always alone. She never had a friend. Not even

Senketsu. She always hurt people and was super mean to others, just like you. Then she met me and became kinder and friendly, because she found real friends... and from there on, it didn't matter if she was made out of Life Fibers. I always loved Ryuko... and even if I don't have... well... uhm, a crush on her... I still want to travel the world with her, do fun things, and support her, because I know she will always support me too!" Mako tries to convince Nui. Nui just looks at her.

"It doesn't matter what you are. You... you almost tried to kill me and now y-you cared for me. I know, maybe you don't want me as a friend and that is okay! But... but please find someone for yourself. Ryuko... gave your mom a chance too... and I'm sure she wants to give you a chance too. I know that! Ryuko isn't a bad human. And you aren't a bad human either." Mako continues. Nui looks at Mako hesitantly, then slowly opens her mouth.

"Why do you call me a human when I am just clothing?"

"... you look like one. And you feel like one. It doesn't take more. I don't think you are a bad person. I only think you..." Mako sighs...

"... I only think you didn't have a good life... and that is unfair. And... I... I am really sorry about that." she sighs and looks down.

"But... that doesn't mean it has to stay that way. I... know you can be better than what you are right now. Maybe you can never really understand how others feel and maybe you will always manipulate people to your advantage... but you want to care for Ryuko and Satsuki, you, you do that, I really can hear that! You aren't clothing! Clothing wouldn't even listen to me!"

Nui doesn't answer.

"... right? You... you do listen to me... do you?" Mako smiles hopeful. But Nui doesn't answer. She just stares at her. As if she... can't really comprehend it. Can't really comprehend it anymore. Or

maybe there is something in her head that stops her from understanding.

"I guess I'll just go as human to hell then. Doesn't make much of a difference anymore anyway, does it? Clothing... human... hybrids... I am afraid of death, you know?"

"... but..."

"But the thought of crushing my heart and ending everything is getting easier to think about every hour." Nui answers and closes the car. Mako holds her hand onto the window. Nui sighs.

"... please don't hurt yourself." Mako mumbles and watches how Nui drives away. She turns around and walks towards the grave. There are a few flowers made out of Life Fibers and a little note. Then, Mako hears a door opening. Sukuyo calls her child back into the mansion, and Mako does so. The note falls back with the flower onto the ground again.

A few words are written on it, and a few tears that landed on it.

"I'm sorry, dad."

...

Ryuko can hear a heart beating when she enters the last white Life Fiber. There is nothing in the dark halls anymore. Just a heart. This must be Ragyo's. Hinata appears briefly after Ryuko discovered the heart.

"This room has been empty for a long time. Nothing but this is left." Hinata explains and looks down to it. Ryuko nods slowly.

"So... that is what happened to mom?"

"When she crushed her heart into pieces... I never once heard of her anymore... she is gone. A simple memory. Only her heart fills this room."

"... mom..."

"There is nothing left to see here, Matoi. Your mother... was ice cold... no doubt about that... yet... I believe we both can agree she had her reasons to be like this... and still... those that are like me promised her more than they could give her."

"I understand. Mom wanted a family and found it here... but she got lured with wrong promises. It doesn't excuse what she did... but I guess I... I kinda understand why now... I don't even feel angry... I'm just... disappointed. Living constantly in the fear of dying due to your own mother... that really is heavy."

"Yes... Matoi... your journey soon will be over in the dark halls where we reside."

"What... is there more to see?"

"You will visit one more string... and then... you shall be liberated from this place, and sent back into your body, with arms, and legs, and you will be able to free yourself from the claws of our enforcer."

"What is your plan in all of this? Why do you make me visit these memories?"

"I want to understand... if you can understand..." he answers and dissolves.

"Wa-wait! What do you mean?!" Ryuko asks into the halls. Hinata is gone. The room dissolves and Ryuko is back in the main halls. There are two more white Life Fiber threads. However, the world is starting to fade into red. What does that mean?

The thread in the distance has sounds of fire... and the one closer to her has rain.

Endless rain and thunder. Hearing closely to it reveals a forced laughter, combined with a girl crying. When Ryuko takes a look into

the white Life Fiber... there is a forest... and a little girl with blond hair, smeared full with blood and a forced laughter, and it can't stop laughing anymore. Coldness spreads around the Fiber, and red rifts distort the image inside the longer Ryuko looks into the eyes of her little sister.

Eventually, she is dragged into her memories by Life Fibers...

...

AN: Hope you guys had fun with this chapter! This got really fun to translate, honestly. I think the part where Ragyo transforms is one of my personal favorites in the entire story, when I wrote it I myself was terrified. :D As always, I hope you guys leave a review for me, I always read reviews and they always make my day but I don't want to force you to anything! :D Next chapter Ryuko (!) will take a look at Nui's past... will she understand her? Or will the Life Fibers try to convince Ryuko to end her little sister? I can imagine both. We'll see. I am looking forward to writing this chapter and especially the one that comes after. We'll see each other again in Chapter 23: "Tear You Apart Until You Cry". Thanks for reading and see you! :)

Tear You Apart Until You Cry

AN: Welcome to the new chapter! Now this one might not be as brutal as the others, but it certainly is dark as hell and without saying much, but don't expect any happiness in this one. It will be crushed, like everything. This chapter is tragic, it's sad and if you feel bad, that's totally okay, because what you will read is something no one should suffer through most likely... or maybe they should? Oh... and it might be that some paragraphs contradict themselves in their content. If you notice that... good. Because I want you to get a taste of Nui's twisted mind. This chapter is BY FAR the longest I ever wrote, according to the page I am always writing on, wattpad, it's 17k words. Alright, enough talking. Let's begin the nightmare.

Life Fibers are singing.

"Chosen by the life fibers..."

...

"Destined to great..."

...

"Chosen by the Entity..."

...

"To fulfill their will..."

...

"And to purge the weaklings..."

...

"That is my purpose."

...

"You shall be the first one to venture into a new world. From this day on... you are on your own... until your task is complete..."

...

"... farewell, you, who are our most capable Being..."

...

Birds are chirping and the sun is shining. Quiet steps echo through the forest. A branch breaks. Someone's listening.

"Rei." Nui smiles. She quickly runs into the direction she heard the branch. The young girl looks around. There is a tree stump, and behind it, purple hair. Nui carefully sneaks to the stump and then touches Rei Hoomaru's shoulder.

"Found you!" she smiles happily. Hoomaru chuckles and stands up.

"I suppose I can't hide anymore from you. With six you are pretty clever!"

"Mhm!"

"Another round or do you want to back to the hut?"

"Uhm... the hut! Let us play a game, okay?"

"How about Ludo?"

"Mhm! Ludo is fun!"

"Alright then. Come on, little girl." Hoomaru smiles and holds Nui's hand while they both walk through the forest. Hidden above them and behind the leaves, the large Kiryuin manor stands. The forest is so calm and comfortable. Hoomaru loves to stay around with Nui here. The little girl looks up to her tall protector.

"Did you played more with this "sewing machine"?" Hoomaru asks kind. Nui nods smiling.

"Oh yes! It is super fun!"

"I'm glad you like it."

Ryuko is now in Nui's body when she was six years old. The most notable thing is she notices her strangely kind behaviour. Wasn't she always a monster? Why is she so kind? This must be a trick by the Life Fibers.

A gentle, calm wind blows, and the temperature is comfortable, no wonder, it's summer after all. Nui wears a cute white dress with yellow colours and she has short hair. Her smile is warm and genuine - it's a little girl after all. When Hoomaru arrives in the little tailor's hut Ragyo made for her creation, both sit down at a desk. Hoomaru then opens a shelf with board games and puts one of them on it. It's 3 PM at the moment. Both start playing for a while. Nui seems to have issues winning the game - she has bad luck, probably. Still, it's fun, and it's nice having someone like Hoomaru on her side. Most of the time, Nui is very lonely. No one knows she lives here. Hoomaru rarely visits her, since she herself is rather busy. Time passes, and after two hours, Hoomaru takes out a white coat and puts it on.

"Do you have to go, Rei?"

"Yes. I have a lot of stuff to do in the manor. But I will be back in a few days, okay?"

"... okay."

"Heads up. I know you are lonely but one day you can visit us in the manor."

"... I don't want to be alone."

"I think no one wants that."

"Mhm!"

Hoomaru pets Nui's short hair and then walks to the exit, saying "We'll see us again.", to which Nui just reacts with an "Okay. Good bye, Rei." The door opens, Nui is alone in the hut again. The small girl sighs lonely and goes back to the sewing machine where she tries to experiment with all sorts of cloths. While she struggles a bit with finishing her works still, the ideas she has in her mind are extraordinary creative for her age. Most clothing she wears and stores in the hut was made by herself too. Slowly, time passes, day for day, without any sign of Rei. Sometimes, Nui can see an animal passing by her hut. Whenever that happens, she tries to approach it but every time it runs away. During the nights, Nui can barely sleep because of the scary noises outside - breaking branches, singing leaves... no one is here to take away her otherwise harmless anxiety. Rarely, Nui walks out to watch how the lights of the manor go out. What great things could await her there? It must be an adventure for her up there, for a young girl like her.

The nights seem to go on longer and longer. Nui isn't losing the feeling of being watched, and so does Ryuko. Two months have passed since Hoomaru visited her. The only thing Nui really can do is produce more clothing... nothing more. It also appears to her that strange silhouettes sneak around in the forest, and with every week that passes, the silhouettes come closer to the hut. It's making the little girl anxious, after all, no one can protect her.

The rest of the year, Nui spends very lonely. No one wants to meet her. No one even wants to take a quick look. It's as if she doesn't exist. Worst of all, it makes it much harder to develop social abilities, and these are important in young years. Hoomaru once spoke of children having a family.

What even is a family? Where is her mama and papa? Does she have siblings?... is there a mama, or a papa?

The door slams open during one winter night and Nui jumps up scared. The wind howls, and snow fills the hut.

"H-hello...?" Nui asks scared. Ryuko can feel Nui's anxiety... and knowing she loses this anxiety over time, it makes Ryuko wonder how all of this happened. Outside, someone seems to wait for her. Nui's body shivers full of fear. She hides under her blanket and carefully looks out. Whatever was there is gone? Carefully, Nui stands up and looks out. Foot prints are on the snowy ground. Then, steps on her right are audible, and Nui starts running. Someone wants to catch her! Why would they do that?! The steps are getting louder. The girl is too slow to get away from the person who's chasing her, so she decides to hide under a little gap between two rocks. There is an evil man looking at her.

"I got you now..." the evil man smiles and tries to grab Nui with his hand. Nui crawls back into the dark little hole. A spider crawls on her shoulder and she starts crying. What is this thing!? Who is this man!? Why would they scare the poor girl so much!?

The man is able to grab her little shoe and tries to drag her to him, but that's all he's getting, as he accidentally removes it from her little foot. Nui tries to crawl back into the little cave again. Eventually, the man tries to remove the rock and reveals the scared little girl, and as he is about to grab her, a large red shining arm pierces his upper body, ripping his heart out. He coughs blood that lands near Nui's feet, and then he falls onto his back and eventually dies. Shining colours are revealed, and a tall woman with a red coat, and a scarf around her chin, as well as gauntlets, from which one is covered with blood, and dark boots. The woman throws the heart in her hand away and looks down to the traumatized girl.

"Come, young girl. You are safe now."

Nui is uncertain of what to think. Seeing the evil man die didn't really moved her, it was rather the actions against her that scared her. The woman carefully reaches her hand towards Nui. She did save Nui, and despite Nui's doubts... can it get any worse? Nui doesn't really

know what happened to the man. She doesn't understand the concept of death yet. He's asleep.

He's going to be fine.

So Nui carefully stands up and reaches the woman's hand.

"... who... a-are you?"

"A... friend of Hoomaru. My name is Lady Ragyo. And you are...?"

"... I uhm... I'm... Nui. What did you do to the evil man?"

"He wanted to hurt you, but now he can't anymore, little girl."

"... okay..."

"Follow me. I know a safe haven for you." Ragyo smiles yet somewhat sinister and picks up the little Nui. Ryuko is certain this action must have been planned - Ragyo doesn't simply appear somewhere in the forest in the middle of night and during winter to save a little girl. She scares and traumatizes Nui with terrible fear, all to lure her into her claws. But this has a background. First, Nui has to be anti socialised to make sure she does not know how to handle interactions with other people - with that, she cannot learn who to truly trust unless they help her out, and this just happened with Ragyo, making her for Nui some kind of angel, or protector. It's insane. It's just a little girl.

Ragyo slowly walks up the paths to the manor. Outside the manor are no guards. Everything is quiet and calm. Only the entrance is lightened up, and there is a limousine. Ragyo opens the door to the manor and lets the little Nui back onto the ground safely. Unsure, Nui hides behind Ragyo's legs.

"I want my mama." Nui says scared. Ragyo slowly nods and closes the door. It's much more comfortable here. Much more safer. No one

will hurt Nui here. No evil humans. Or? Nui carefully looks around behind Ragyo as she puts off her coat.

"You don't have a mother." Ragyo answers.

"But... I am a child. Children have mamas and papas, right?"

"Some children don't have one, or a papa. Some grow up without a family. Just like you."

"... I want a mama."

"When I was... a child... my mama often hurt me. Very often, actually. You're... better off without a family." Ragyo answers and looks to the scattered Nui.

"Nui, yes?"

"Uhm, yes, you... oh yes... Rei?"

"Yes. Rei... sometimes speaks about you. She is not at home at the moment."

"Your house is super big!"

"It is suuuuuuper big. A little girl like you can quickly lose herself in it. Stay here in these halls. Everything will be fine. I promise." Ragyo smiles and looks into Nui's face. She is not sure what to think of this, but since Ragyo saved her life, she can be trusted. Ryuko is thrown out of Nui's body and... is suddenly a child herself. She is just as tall as Nui and just as young, except her mental conditions are those of her 22 age year old personality, meaning she can still process complex thoughts. Nui spreads pure innocence. Still, Ryuko feels something is off with Nui. After all, Nui just saw a man dying in front of her and it kept her ice cold. Sure, Nui, as mentioned, does not understand death yet, but seeing an image like this must move something in a child. Steps are audible.

"Mother?" Satsuki calls. Ragyo looks to the stairs and notices her daughter Satsuki that looks down to Ragyo and then to Nui.

"Mother, where were you?"

"We have a new... roommate, Satsuki." Ragyo answers. Nui stays behind Ragyo, and she is surprised. This is a child! But it behaves completely different! And did this girl just called Ragyo "mother"? Doesn't that mean mama too!? Nui rather says nothing, but she is excited to learn more about this girl that seems to be more or less like her! It's so cool not being the only child anymore! However, Satsuki ignores Nui.

"Is it true father has died? The men said he has died three days ago!"

"Not now, Satsuki. You'd rather greet your new roommate, please." Ragyo pleads. Satsuki hesitates at first and musters Nui.

Nui appears so wrong for her. Does she seriously trust Ragyo? Someone like Nui can only have evil things in her mind. Ryuko doesn't know what to think.

"Uh... uhm hello." Nui smiles kind. Satsuki does not answer.

"Come, little Nui. We have a room for you... you will like it here." Ragyo smiles and walks with Nui through the large building. Ryuko stays in the hall and then dissolves into Life Fibers again.

Arriving in the dark halls, she is back in her Life Fiber form. It feels strangely comfortable here now all of a sudden. A calm, kind melody sung by Life Fibers is audible, and in the distance, a new Memory Fiber appeared. Illusions of large Life Fiber Beings are everywhere that look down to Ryuko, possibly proud? When Ryuko comes closer to the Thread... she can see Nui in the mirror. Ryuko moves her hand to the right, Nui does the same.

Does Nui imitate Ryuko's movements? Or do the Life Fibers think Ryuko is Nui? What is going on here?

Life Fibers gently draw Ryuko into the next memory...

...

Hoomaru has been feeling bad recently. Nui notices how she seems to feel sad most of the time. Was Lady Ragyo angry at her? Or did Hoomaru do something bad? Nui doesn't really know what Hoomaru did, but what she does know is: she has to somehow make Hoomaru happy again! Nui loves to make people happy! Making people happy is the best thing ever! And to do that, Nui follows Hoomaru to the garden, seeing her at the bench. The young woman sits there and looks at the forest. The clouds and the sky look beautiful today. Nui pouts and looks around in the garden. She decides to carefully pull out a few nice looking flowers and puts them into a little pocket on her dress. Suddenly, a butterfly appears, and Nui chuckles. The girl tries to catch the butterfly, and after a few attempts, she carefully catches it and holds it safely between her hands, without hurting it. The animal crawls on her hands, but it feels funny, and she wouldn't want to harm it. With the butterfly in her hands and the flowers in her pocket, she walks proud towards Hoomaru and speaks with her.

"Hello Rei!" Nui smiles kind. Hoomaru looks down to Nui.

"Hello Nui."

"Look what I found! This is for you!" Nui grins and opens up her hands. The butterfly crawls around a bit more on Nui's hand.

"I found a little butterfly! I hope you like him! He is a friend!"

Hoomaru can't resist a little chuckle.

"Hehe... that's kind of you." she answers and lets the butterfly walk onto her hand. Then, she holds her hand up and looks at it. The

butterfly watches Hoomaru a brief moment and then flies away. Nui waves her hand towards the butterfly as leaves them.

"Good bye butterfly! Rei, I have more presents for you! Look!" Nui smiles and shows Hoomaru the flowers. Hoomaru takes them with gratitude and lays them onto her lap. Then she pats Nui's hair. Nui chuckles. Ryuko can however clearly see that Hoomaru is sad about Nui - she knows exactly this genuine laughter will be gone sooner or later. It hurts seeing her like this. Nui is not allowed to laugh the way she does - she only is allowed when it benefits Lady Ragyo and the higher cause. Worse than that, she knows while Ragyo is not her mother per se, since she hasn't contributed to her birth other than initiating it, she would never accept Nui as daughter. Nui is not allowed to have a family.

Ryuko notices that too. Of course, Nui is happy right now, but deep inside the little girls heart is the wish for a family, for a mama or a papa, for a sibling, after all, she is a child. She wants someone on her side. Someone who can protect her. That is something totally normal, and it makes her more human than Ryuko would have expected at first. Having someone on your side. Having a family. Nui then jumps up the bench and sits down next to Hoomaru.

"Rei?"

"Yes?"

"Did... you had a mama?"

"... I did, yes."

"Was she nice?"

"She was, yes. She always cared for me. When I was sad, she cheered me up. And when I felt in danger, she protected me. But she died years ago."

"Oh no."

"... I sometimes miss her."

"I wonder if I have a mama."

Hoomaru has a hard time answering this thought.

"... maybe you find her one day. I'm sure... no one is truly alone."

"Rei?"

"Mhm?"

"You... uhm... said she uh... "died?" What does that mean?"

"That... means you close your eyes, but you never wake up anymore."

"Like sleeping?"

"Yes. Like sleeping. But you don't wake up anymore. You... only dream."

"Is it bad when you die?"

"... you... know, we all have to die one day. But you and me, we are still very young. We will live for a long time. Especially you."

"No! I am scared of dying! I will never die! Dying is boring! And you will not die too! I will make sure you will not die, okay? And then we play games!" Nui chuckles kind. Hoomaru nods. Let Nui have that happiness. It'll soon vanish. That's Lady Ragyo's wish after all.

"I think Mr. Butterfly will come back later and then he will fly around. I will learn to fly and when I do, you will fly with me!" Nui smiles.

"I'm looking forward to it, Nui." Hoomaru smiles and hears the door in the background. Mr. Kuroido, Ragyo's servant, appears. He isn't as fat as he will be in the following years, but his stupid grin is still as disgusting as always. Hoomaru reacts with distrust. She never liked

this man. Nui is slightly scared of him and hides behind Hoomaru. Kuroido seems like he wants to speak with Hoomaru, and so, she stands up. He whispers something into her ear. Nui's observant seems paralyzed for a brief moment.

She sighs, tries to keep a kind and friendly appearance and walks to Nui then.

"Little Nui, I need to speak with Lady Ragyo now, okay? Please just stay here. I will be back later. And then we can eat ice cream, if you want to." she smiles, but forced. Nui doesn't notice Hoomaru's difference in her emotion. For her, it looks completely normal. Ryuko believes something bad is going to happen sooner or later. Kuroido watches Nui a slight moment and then leaves the garden with Hoomaru, leaving Nui alone. She shrugs with her shoulders and walks to the fence. There is so much fun stuff to find in the manor. Every time she leaves her room it's like an exciting adventure to live through! Maybe she can find more friends like Mr. Butterfly!

"Woooooowwww!"

Such a beautiful, big forest. Hard to believe she grew up there. Nui climbs up the fence carefully and balances on it. She isn't afraid of that. It rather gives her adrenaline. If she fears something, then a person, but actions other people would determine as dangerous is something Nui doesn't really have. If she wants to climb onto a fence, then she just does that, nothing will happen, she surely won't fall down into the forest.

Nothing can happen.

Everything is okay.

Steps are audible. Nui tries to balance a bit more and then, someone speaks up to her. Six men are on her right, and they seem to be angry at her.

"Uhm... hello." Nui smiles innocent. These men wouldn't hurt her, right? They belong to Ragyo, after all! Then again, there seems to be no REVOCS sign on their suits. Are these really Ragyo's men?

One of them picks up Nui forcefully up. She fidgets around scared and tries to scream until one of the men binds her mouth with a tape. Ryuko feels panic inside Nui and even herself. She wants this to stop! Nui can't do anything, she's being insulted, harassed, and as the men walk through the complex. She cries, yet the men scream at her, forcing her to leave it be unless she wants to be hurt even more.

Eventually, the men and the poor Nui arrive at a large building which they open. There is a small rest room and a door that leads into another room, and when they open it, there is nothing. There is only darkness. There isn't any furniture, no light switches, no lamps, nothing, it's just dark and empty, and the men throw Nui into that room. Where is Hoomaru!? Where is Lady Ragyo!? Someone has to save her!

The room is ice cold, as Ryuko notices. If there would be at least something! At last, the men unbind Nui's mouth and leave her in the darkness, kicking her away as she tries to run out of the room. She cries even more. One of the men walk back to her and pick her up.

"If you cry one more time you will regret it!"

"Why are you..."

"Quiet now!"

"... o-okay..."

Nui falls down on the ground again and stays quiet. Tears are leaving her eyes but she tries to cooperate - maybe they won't be too mean. And lastly, the door closes and gets locked.

She's whimpering in the dark. If she cries, the men will come back and hurt her even more. She can't scream. The men will come back

and hurt her. She can't escape. If she would, the men will come back and hurt her.

"... mama...?"

Echo.

"... papa?"

...

"... please don't leave me alone... I haven't done anything..."

...

Silence enters the room. There are no sounds audible outside...

...

How much time has passed already?

...

...

...

...

...

..

"Hello...?"

...

...

...

"... please, mama..."

...

...

...

How many hours have passed already?

Days?

Weeks?

... maybe months...?

Sometimes, a strange white little light appears briefly. Needs just like a human is something Nui does not have - she doesn't necessarily have to eat, drink, or go for little girls. Sleep, yes. But the rest? No.

Couldn't Hoomaru at least visit her? Does Hoomaru even know where Nui is? She must know it. She must! Hoomaru has to save her! Or Lady Ragyo!

Then again, Hoomaru disappeared when the men came. Did she knew about that? Did she left Nui alone on purpose... just like before? Nui sighs. No one wants to help her. It's unfair, she hasn't done anything. At one point, Nui starts tearing and whining due to her loneliness. When that happens, a man enters the room and hits her.

"Stop crying!"

he screams. Nui cries even more. Again, he punches her, until Nui finally stops crying.

She just walks into a corner of the room and sits down.

It's cold.

It's dark.

It's lonely.

Why are humans like this?

...

...

...

"... mama?"

...

...

...

"... I haven't done anything..."

...

...

...

At one point, a clock start ticking.

Tick.

Tack.

Tick.

Tack.

...

Tick.

Tack.

Tick.

Tack.

...

...

...

A door opens. A bright light in many colours appears. Is that Lady Ragyo? Her light blurs Nui's vision. Ragyo notices Nui sitting there in the corner. The room is made out of concrete. There is blood on the ground. It must be her own when she got punched. They haven't broken her anything, but slight wounds appeared nonetheless. As Ragyo steps into the room, the poor girl runs at Ragyo - she doesn't want to cry anymore.

Maybe someone hurts her when she does.

Nui is seven years old now - she spent her birthday in this dark cell. Her clothes are ruined, and stink. Ragyo looks down to Nui.

"La-lady... Ragyo..."

"There you are..."

"They... they scared me... a-and they..."

"The evil men are gone now, Nui." Ragyo says slowly in a seemingly caring voice, but in truth she doesn't care at all. Nui is just a tool. And Ragyo has to forge it - that requires time and a few... questionable deeds. Who would want such a brat as a daughter anyway?

"Can they apologize?"

"Do you want to see what happened to them?"

"Uhm..."

"I'll show you. Trust me." Ragyo says and holds Nui's little hand. She walks with Nui to the rest room.

Blood is everywhere. The men are dead. These were the men that hijacked Nui. But Nui doesn't feel a thing. It looks... normal. Ryuko is disgusted, but Nui just looks at them, as if it would totally normal. Carefully, Nui approaches one of the dead men. His arm was cut off.

"W-what happened to him?"

"He is dead now."

"Are they sleeping forever now?"

"Yes. They will never wake up again. Humans are evil. All of them, Nui. They hurt little children like you."

"Is Rei a human too?"

"Yes, Rei is a human too. My little daughter Satsuki is a human as well. All of them are evil. Some more, some less. And they do bad things, not just hurting children like you. Maybe Rei just pretends to like you? Maybe she hates you too? Just like everyone?"

"Everyone hates me..."

"You are simply... different."

"I don't want to be different anymore." Nui says sad and looks at the dead men. There is no feeling of disgust or anxiety when she sees them. Normally, a child would be scared if it sees something so cruel, but not Nui. For Nui, this really is something normal. Ryuko at least notices how she doesn't feel a thing, except for a latent desire

for blood. She doesn't necessarily need it, after all, she survived the last seven years without it too... could that be because of her partially human origin? Or does this desire grow over time? She isn't an adult yet.

"You are better, Nui. Be patient. Your time will come." Ragyo says and collects some of the blood which she then shows Nui. She reacts perplexed.

"Touch it."

"Uhm... okay..." Nui answers carefully and holds her finger into the blood. The blood is sucked into her finger, and somehow, she starts feeling a little bit better now. Ryuko notices as well how the new and fresh blood refreshes her energy. It wasn't necessary, but it felt good.

"Do you like it?"

"It's weird."

"It always is." Ragyo smiles very, very slightly. Nui nods and looks up to Ragyo helplessly.

"Let us take a bath. We need to clean you, don't we?"

"Yes." Nui answers obedient. Ragyo probably knows what's good for Nui. Nui sees her every once in a while, but whenever Ragyo does appear, she is really kind and friendly to Nui. Like a mother.

"Lady... Ragyo?"

"Yes?"

"You... are really nice to... to me... c-can you be my mama, please?"

Ragyo doesn't answer. She chuckles very slightly. She doesn't want her as child. It's foggy and early morning, the sun hasn't risen yet. Neither Nui nor Ryuko can say how long they were imprisoned, but

really, neither of them want to know it either. Experiences like these make it extremely difficult for Nui to like humans, and this was certainly the main intention.

Developing a hate on humans, on everything that doesn't wear the name "Nui Harime" or "Ragyo Kiryuin." And from here on, it only becomes worse - torture and sadness arise. With time, the methods of how to manipulate Nui become worse and worse, all in the attempt to cull out every single emotion inside her, so much until she can start pretending perfectly well. Or maybe she doesn't pretend it and simply believes she is much happier without worrying about a single thing. Her innocence is destroyed entirely.

It's an disgustingly evil plan that works perfectly well, rendering harmless people such as Rei Hoomaru into monsters. Yet it's Rei who cares for Nui, and not Ragyo. But of course, Nui doesn't realize that all of these things only to create a tool. The cruellest point in all of this is however that Ragyo let's Nui build up trust to her, and the hope that Ragyo might be interested in her after all... and maybe become her mother.

This wish of having a mama, a papa or siblings is immensely large in Nui, larger than all the few emotions that are in the little girl. She doesn't have many, there is no feeling of disgust. Happiness is a emotion Nui can express not entirely - a kind smile is everything, maybe a little laughter, but no true happiness, in which you are happy the next few hours. Just like anger: sure, Nui can be angry too, but only very rarely, and when she does, it's for a few minutes, not half a day, and it's all forgotten again... or oppressed? Everything fades away. Nui is not a human. She learns emotions different, they work different in her.

She is a psychopath.

She always was one. But rather latently. These emotion problems were there all the time, but never developed. One could say she just has it more difficult than others, and Ryuko notices how, over the course of the memory, in the following months, Nui descends more

and more into madness and her problems. Not voluntarily, but the longer she gets to hear she is not allowed to cry, that the world is cruel to her, that humans are evil, that nothing in this world is worth having empathy for, short: everyone - absolutely everyone is evil, and Nui has to learn how to adapt, how to manipulate people to her advantage and then, when the time has come, she can strike them down. And she can do it best by playing with people. This torturing makes sure Nui cannot develop her personality, become an adult, she stays childish.

Vermin. That's all humans are. She's yelled at whenever she does a tiny little mistake. She's laughed at whenever she's being sad. And whenever Nui is trying to have fun, Mr. Kuroido appears and annoys her, until this brief moment of happiness is gone.

Over time, she realizes what her true origin is. Born as a Life Fiber Being from the primordial Life Fiber, born to serve the Kiryuin family - she once swore that to the High Entity. Yet of course, as a little child, she never thought of that. Finding out where she was born was a scary yet revealing moment. The image in her head is getting clearer and clearer - of course no one likes her.

She is clothing.

She always was it.

Or is she not? Is she maybe a hybrid? What determines someone as clothing? Is it determined by the way someone is made of? Senketsu is clothing, yet he acts like a human. His physical appearance is clothing. But inside, there is a sign of a human. He may never be one, but the similarity is there.

Is it so different with Nui? She has this human body, she has this conscience of a human, she even has the feelings of a human... or at least she had them.

How should one judge a person? Do we judge them according to their character. To their deeds? To their origin? Or to what they are

made of?

Is a person made out of clothing evil by default? Or is there something good in them? Who is Ryuko to judge over Nui after seeing such evil deeds? It reminds Ryuko of herself. Ryuko used to be hurt, she was alone the entire time, just like Nui. Maybe Nui was right when she said they aren't that different. Both Ryuko and Nui are alone. Both want a family. Or a friend. Just... anything they could hold onto.

It was Ryuko who achieved that luck. Nui did not.

Even a Life form that cannot comprehend emotions as good as other people anymore can do good deeds. But Ragyo wouldn't want that. Ragyo doesn't want to help Nui understand her emotional... disconnections. And Ragyo doesn't want to give Nui a mama. The reason for that is simple.

As long as Nui doesn't have a mama, she has the wish of having one. And she wants Ragyo as mama. Nui believes she can make Ragyo happy, and if Ragyo is happy, she might adopt Nui as her daughter. Accepting Nui as daughter would destroy Ragyo's entire plan - that is why Ragyo cannot take her as one. She doesn't want to anyway. Ragyo uses her desire, her wish for a mother to her advantage. And it works perfectly well. Too well.

...

A door opens. Nui leaves her room. She is ten years old now. Her hair has gotten slightly longer and first signs of Twin drills are visible. She smiles kind and looks around in the manor. Satsuki sits in the living room and reads a book while her servant Soroi cleans everything up. Nui curiously watches Satsuki and then walks down the stairs to her.

"Hello Satsuki!" Nui grins. Satsuki ignores her.

"What are you reading right now?!"

"..."

"Hello?" Nui asks and approaches Satsuki. Satsuki moves the book down slightly, her eyes are visible for Nui now. Ragyo's daughter sighs, closes the eyes briefly, then opens them again and continues to read.

"Satsuki?" she asks. Ryuko feels the loneliness in every cell of her body. Everyone ignores her. Satsuki doesn't want to do anything with someone who blindly obeys Ragyo's words.

"I want to play with you, okay!" Nui says happy. Satsuki closes the book swiftly and looks at Nui.

"Leave, Harime. You are annoying."

"Okay, but..."

"Do you want me to call Kuroido?" Satsuki threatens. Nui takes a few steps back.

"You are mean to me."

"And you blind yourself to the truth."

"What truth? No, you are mean."

"Go now!"

"I don't want to go! I want to play with you! You never play with me!"

"Kuroido!" Satsuki yells. The evil servant appears briefly after.

"Harime is causing trouble. She wants to hurt someone."

"That's not true! You are a liar! You are so mean!"

Kuroido grins and grabs Nui's bowtie on her neck, then leaves the room with her. Ryuko can't believe it. Did Satsuki seriously lie to

Kuroido just to make Nui look even worse? Satsuki's hate towards her mother and Life Fibers is and was always justified, no doubt about that, but it looks like Satsuki never once attempted to clear up Nui about Ragyo's plans.

"Ow, that hurts! Stop it!" Nui gripes and punches Kuroido's belly, causing Kuroido to drop Nui. Nui runs away, Kuroido simply chuckles as she escapes and hides somewhere in the building.

"If you continue to annoy Miss Kiryuin's daughter I'll do much more than just hurt you, hehehe!"

...

"... everyone is mean to me... I hate humans... they are so mean... mama would protect me from them... stupid humans... they are stupid... stupid... stupid... stupid..."

The world dissolves, and Ryuko falls onto the ground. As Life Fiber Being, she is back in the dark halls.

In the dark halls, rifts seem to break them apart slowly. Life Fibers flow out of these rifts... as if they would depict blood. They are still singing, yet their melodies became more quiet, calmer, darker. With Ryuko walking through the halls, she can hear humans laughing, and Ragyo quietly humming the song of the floral crown - the Blumenkranz. Carefully, Ryuko reaches the next Memory Fiber and notices Nui again. Blood is on her body. Her face expression is different too. It appears empty and lonely. On her side of the Memory Fiber it's raining, and the lights of a city are visible.

Coming closer to the mirror inside the Fiber, coldness leaves it. These halls. change Ryuko. Nui's memories... change Ryuko. They incite this hate she once had, towards her, towards everyone who looks strange, and towards the Life Fiber Sickness. Nui has her devils masks in her eyes now. She didn't had them before. The young woman takes a few steps back, but when she does that, Nui leaves the Fiber and grabs Ryuko's dull arms.

"Come, Ryuko. You'll see. I ain't the mad one here. Hehe. I'm certainly not. They are." Nui grins and pulls Ryuko into the memory. Both dissolve.

...

With 13 years, Nui is now a young teenager. Satsuki continues to ignore her. And Hoomaru has gotten stranger. She always was strange, if Nui thinks about it closely. All of these false kindness must have been an evil trick of her. The stupid smile Hoomaru always had, it must be wrong, wrong, wrong, it cannot be any different! Wrong! It annoys Nui! She always sits in her room and sews together new clothes. Sometimes, Ragyo takes Nui to Nagoya where she can learn new techniques to improve her sewing skills. Nui is a natural talent when it comes to clothing. She loves to produce clothes, they make people happy, and especially herself. To see how people wear the stuff she made is great, and it fills her with a life goal.

Lady Ragyo is always happy when Nui does something for her, and even if it is just a new piece of clothing to show Lady Ragyo how great Nui finds her. The young girl does everything for her mistress, all in the hope... that this mistress could one day be her mama, and Nui her daughter.

This is Nui's biggest dream. And it has to be mentioned every once in a while. It's not just something Nui wants. She doesn't just wishes it. The wish to have an own family, to not be different anymore, to be as great as Lady Ragyo, that is what she wants! If necessary, Nui copies Lady Ragyo's ideals too!

And besides, Life Fibers are superior to humans indeed. Why show mercy and empathy to those who couldn't show any mercy to her? Humans hate everything that is different. Once it falls out of their norm, they want to get rid of the problem. And Nui is such a problem. Satsuki. Kuroido. Soroi. The other servants. Hoomaru.

They are all evil.

Something is wrong with this girl. She clearly needs help, but she won't get it. She should disappear from the world. Still: Nui doesn't even realize what people do to her anymore. It's normal now, after all. Every week, Nui is harassed with an evil deed and depicted as a bad person. She doesn't have the mood to talk with people anymore, humans obviously don't appear kind to her either. No one even tries to talk with Nui without having an evil intent. But this hate on humans blinds her from the truth - Hoomaru being the only one who, despite Nui's serious mental issues she developed, and her evil personality, still stands on her side. Often, Hoomaru takes a look at Nui at the morning to wake her up to make sure she doesn't come late to the private lessons. On evenings, Hoomaru reads a little story for Nui. With 13 years?

Yes, because if one thing is left in Nui's mind, then her childish personality. How is a girl like Nui supposed to develop her mind and come out of her childish behaviour if she couldn't even live it out? Especially under these tragic circumstances?

Nui just wants to play. But the way she wants to play is slowly turning more and more... crazy. Before, it was fun little board games, roleplaying, telling fun jokes to each other... but nowadays it feels more like playing pranks on people with the intent on hurting them. Not necessarily killing them - but sometimes it's just more fun to leave someone alive and see them struggle. It has something fascinating on it - seeing the pain on others.

The private lessons are boring. Nui barely listens, but she does her homework nonetheless - for Lady Ragyo. The teacher is paid excellent. That's the only reason why he is still around. Satsuki in the meantime visits a normal school. For normal children. Not like Nui, who isn't normal. She is strange. It's all her fault, right?

Some humans see reflections of themselves in the most varied ways. For some, it's a statue. For others, it's music - or an image they see and printed into their head. Nui found out what reflects her.

In the last weeks, it rained a lot in Japan and it seems like these storms will go on for quite some time. Whenever it rains, Nui runs to a window and watches the rain fall curiously. It falls from the sky and destroys everything - but it also creates new life. It looks so cool when it falls. In another memory, Ryuko watches how Nui sits alone in the living room, watching the rain. It cheers Nui up - genuinely. When it's raining, Nui feels understood.

"Don't cry, child."

That's what falls into her head. Don't cry. Otherwise, humans will use it to their advantage. But Nui won't give them that advantage anymore.

"The world is cruel, Nui. You are superior. You are a Being far more worth than anyone else."

Ragyo is right.

Of course Nui is better than the rest. That's why they all hate her. She is different because she is better. And there is no reason to hold that fact back anymore.

Ragyo is always right.

There is no reason to cry. Let the weather cry, while you walk on this earth with a smile on your face, knowing nothing can stop you.

A thunder rings out.

Ryuko finds herself back with Nui in the living room of the manor again, as a 14 year old child, as she watches the rain. Briefly after, Hoomaru appears.

It's the memory in which Nui brief moments later receives her parasol, and with which she visits Nagoya, alone, to finally find out how it feels like being with humans. Finally, she can see for herself how cruel the world and humans are. Ragyo always issued cruel

deeds on Nui, but letting her experience the feeling of death, even if it's temporary, is the worst thing Ragyo could do to her. Far worse than just making her feel like nothing.

Dying and coming back into the world of the living is a memory no one wants to experience. Because once you do know what happens after your end... well... is it a curse or a blessing? What happens after death? Nui saw it. As the only one between the three sisters, she knows what happens when life finds its end... and the longer Ryuko stays in her memories, the heavier the thought of how her life truly ended once, five years ago, becomes. Madness, culminating into the final and ultimate deed one can do - suicide, with a smile on your face, in the hope this final action will please Lady Ragyo... her mistress... her... mother. If she can convince her.

As Nui is finally executed by the men, Ryuko feels it on her own body. Feeling death. She felt this pain once already, but not like this. Not this intense. Only Nui, Ragyo and Ryuko know death. And when Nui wakes up in the dark alley... only then she really is able to comprehend what is going on in Nui's mind. It's all clear now.

There were a few slight emotions in Nui. The things that made Nui a person you can like despite all of her... problems. There was kindness towards those she really liked, and empathy to those who really, really deserved it. But now all of these things are dead. Sadness, pity, happiness... these things did exist, slightly, yes, but they existed. And they were honest. When Hoomaru felt bad, Nui genuinely tried to cheer her friend up with the butterfly, because she really wanted her to feel better again. That's all she wanted. All in the hope Hoomaru would like Nui. But she obviously doesn't.

Crying doesn't make any sense. And it's enough. Nui has enough. They killed her - Ragyo killed her. And sent Nui into a spiral of death, obedience, slavery. It wasn't enough hurting her verbally. They had to kill her.

There is no turning back now. Not for Ryuko either. All the torture Nui had to suffer Ryuko now suffered herself - and it changes her. Even

she realizes more and more the coldness in her body. Not even with Junketsu she felt something like this. The desire for hate, for satisfying it is becoming stronger and stronger, and the wish for absolution in a body that may not deserve it... even though it never was Nui's intention to be the way she is. It's wrong, still, and correct to be against Nui and what she wants to do in the future. But there was a time where people could have helped her. If anything, if there are people to blame for Nui's misere, then it certainly is Ragyo, and possibly Satsuki. Satsuki was the only connection to someone like her she could had, and Satsuki denied this connection.

Satsuki never once considered helping Nui. She only ignored her. It shows once more even though Satsuki's intentions of defeating her mother were good and right, they experienced losses - some of them unnecessarily. Satsuki did bad things, and it cannot be defended, as Ryuko finds out.

It's strange to think how Ryuko never once tried to understand Nui or her motives. But that is probably normal - you likely only then understand a person once you take the time to actually examine them. You'd have to take a step back with your emotions and think logically. Ryuko is becoming a second Nui, at least partially. Coldness is what she feels - emotionally and physically.

But maybe all of this is temporary and once the memory is over, Ryuko is normal. In this moment however, the feeling of being like Nui is scary, yet somewhat empowering. As Nui arrives back at the Kiryuin manor and fights Satsuki, Ryuko notices again how cold Nui became. Ragyo's plan worked. She'd fight everyone, no matter how long she knows them. And now she has a tool that is obedient to her every sentence.

After the bath with Ragyo in which Nui cleans herself up, Nui happily walks back into her bed and cuddles with the blanket and a little puppet of herself she made, knowing it feels great to just fight back for once. And with that, the memory vanishes...

...

Masaru currently works in the server room of Neo-REVOCS, typing down command lines. Ichiro must be gone at the moment, Masaru wouldn't visit the room just like that, and it's not like Ichiro would need a long time to find his henchman. Seems like he is planning to contact Nudist Beach and bringing Ryuko out of this building. After all, he managed to do it once. The process takes some time however and a lot of computer power. He must be careful. Ichiro believes Masaru is loyal, but one mistake will be his certain death, and the Ashigaru still have to be manipulated too. As the commands are executed and scripts are processed, Masaru overwrites the security measurements of HQ's power core - the part of the building that grants Neo-REVOCS all it's energy.

It would make for a hellish firework if something would happen to the core. And Masaru, who was involved in the process of building it, knows that well. His plan is simple: getting Ryuko, Senketsu and himself out of the building, then being rescued by Nudist Beach and eventually stomping Neo-REVOCS into the ground. Once the Ashigaru are programmed to work on Nudist Beach's side, this can only be changed in the server room, and without a power core, the entire building would break apart, leaving only the Samurai and the Couturiers left, and Ichiro himself. But this will still take some time...

...

Ryuko appears back in the dark halls.

Rain is falling from the black sky. Around Ryuko, Life Fibers crawl on the walls, and their melodies have gone even more quiet. They don't sound happy anymore, if anything, they are just there. The walls are dark red now. A white Life Fiber is in front of Ryuko. In it, she can see Nui with even longer hair, just as long as her twin drills from five years ago. She sits there in the dining hall, with a slight smile. The closer she comes to the memory, the louder quiet voices become. It's Ragyo's voice, but also voices of other people that made fun of Nui, and her own, as if she would talk with herself, since she answers her own questions. Ryuko dissolves and appears back in Nui's body.

"No one's coming." Nui pouts.

"Why is no one coming to my birthday? Don't they know who I am?"

Steps can be heard every once in a while. Outside it rains, and thunders can be heard too. No one is coming. Not even after several hours. She just sits there, stubborn. Eventually, dinner begins, and Nui still stays on her seat. Ragyo, Satsuki, Hoomaru, Kuruido and the other filthy humans appear... but Nui just sits there and looks at Satsuki, with a kind smile.

"She looks beautiful. Her hair is surely soft. I like Satsuki. When she looks at me with this angry face. It's so cute. I'm so glad I know her." Nui thinks smiling. But behind that, there is just an illusion Nui builds up for herself. She isn't sure whether Nui really likes Satsuki or not. But inside Nui's sick head, nothing truly works anymore, and it's not even her fault. A loud thunder rings out. Satsuki notices Nui watching her but ignores it and continues her dinner. Nui blurs out everything in her vision except for Ragyo and Satsuki, and as Hoomaru sits down to Nui, Nui moves her chair a bit away from her and closer to Ragyo. Hoomaru is stupid anyway. Who would like to sit next to her? She hasn't done anything good for Nui anyway. Only Ragyo did.

"Satsuki, you'll have to go more into detail later on about this "Honnoji" Academy. The foundation is finished - there are hundreds of empty, cheap buildings. They will make for great cottages." Ragyo mentions and looks at her daughter.

"As you wish, mother."

"Satsuki?" Nui asks kind. Satsuki looks up to Nui.

"Why don't you say happy birthday to me? I always say happy birthday to you too."

Satsuki ignores that. Nui looks perplexed towards Ragyo who however doesn't care for her comment.

"Happy birthday, Nui." Hoomaru says and smiles.

"Have I spoken with you, doofus?" Nui asks and shows her tongue. Hoomaru shakes her head.

"You are ungrateful as always, Nui."

"Blah blah, "ungrateful", would you kindly die for me? I don't like you, talk with this fat Kuroido." Nui answers stubborn and looks away. Her food is getting cold. No signs of regret, or hesitation of saying what is in her mind.

The dinner continues but Nui denies her meal. She doesn't need it anyway. It's some kind of animal food, looks like cow, and it is disgusting. It doesn't taste well, it looks weird, and fish is much better anyway. You should enjoy food, not eat it in masses. In the kitchen, Nui tried herself on baking a little cake, but it rather looks... amateur like. But if no one can make a cake for her, she has to make the cake for herself. At 9 PM, Nui enters the kitchen and takes a look at it.

It's a strawberry cake that however looks slightly crooked. Well, you can't be talented in everything. Nui looks outside the window. The rain has gotten stronger. Nui picks up the cake carefully and walks with it to her room where she puts it on the table, looking at it.

It looks, even with it's flaws, tasty.

But she might be just lying to herself and believes that.

Normally, you'd eat a cake with friends, and not alone. But Nui doesn't have friends. Only herself. But... that is okay.

She doesn't need friends. As a matter of fact, no one needs friends. The best friend you can have is yourself. On the cake is a little piece of paper, showing a happy Nui. Nui takes a closer look at the paper doll.

"Look at you. You are smiling. You must be having many friends, Nui. Do you have a family?" Nui asks her paper doll. She turns it around. It's the doll again.

"See? You have a friend. You are awesome.

You surely must have killed someone to get a friend.

I wish I could have a friend. That would be fun." Nui smiles and turns the paper doll around, then back onto the cake. She walks to the shelf that contains dozens of puppets - puppets of the people in and around the manor. Kuroido looks horribly abused, Ragyo stands on top of it with beautiful colours, Hoomaru that is only slightly better treated than the other servants and Satsuki, who receives at least a slight bit of respect... and a puppet of Nui herself.

The puppet smiles. Nui picks it up from the shelf and takes a closer look at it. It consists of cotton, but nothing more. Maybe Nui could bring it to life? Curious about that thought, Nui approaches the chest on her right and opens it. Next to the stitching tools, there are Life Fibers... even orange ones. She grabs the Life Fibers and then sits down to her work bench where she starts working on a clone of herself like an obsessed researcher. First, she starts with the general puppet structure. Then she inserts the Nexus Fibers, and another layer of Life Fibers, and in the center of the puppet seems to be space for the orange Fiber, which she pulls out.

"You, my little Thread of Fate, will share the same "fate" like I do! Isn't that cool?" Nui tells herself and puts the Thread of Fate into the puppet. Lastly, Nui grabs out a needle and cuts open her arm. Blood leaves it, but she doesn't care. It feels nice. It feels like this little sacrifice will benefit her. The blood falls into the puppet. As the Life Fibers suck up the blood in the puppet, Nui's arm regenerates and she finishes the little clone. She takes a closer look at it with excitement, breathes in and says...

"Hey, little Miss Harime!" she chuckles!

But nothing happens. Even after minutes, nothing happens.

"Hey?"

"..."

"Hellohoohoo?! I know you are there!" Nui smiles. But nothing happens. The puppet is sat down carefully onto the ground, but still.. nothing happens. It still rains outside, as if the world would fall apart.

"... please just work." Nui begs. The puppet doesn't wake up. Nui sighs disappointed.

"... it never works... nothing works." she mumbles sad and looks onto the ground. Only violence works. Nui takes a look at the clock. Working on her failed experiment took her three hours, it's 12:30 AM. The little psychopath shakes her head and sits down onto her bed. Ryuko feels that Nui tries to not tear up, she really tries her best... and it works. She can't properly cry anymore. She still smiles, even with this sad voice and appearance. Even though she appears soft and friendly, disappointment can be felt, and only that. Nui grabs a pyjama and lays down into her bed, with the tasty cake next to her. She spent her fifteenth birthday alone, too. Just like all the birthdays she had. The worst one was her seventh when she was inside this dark room. This one... was a good one. A happy one. Remember, you need to see everything with a kind smile and happiness, and Lady Ragyo always says you can't cry in a world like this. It doesn't matter anyway, and besides, friends are there to be used, not to be treated equally.

...

Nui simply hides under her blanket and tries to sleep, and she does start sleeping fast... but a few hours later, she can sense a hand on her back. Carefully, Nui turns around and... sees herself. Nui stands there with a smile and a few cake crumbs around her mouth. The real Nui is confused and looks to the cake - the clone took a little bite from it. The clone is grinning mischievously.

"Woooooaaaaahhhh..." the real Nui smiles happily.

"Hello!" the second Nui smiles.

"You are me!"

"No, I am you! Haha!"

"And together we are..."

"... best friends forever!" they laugh and hug each other briefly.

"Happy, happy HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY BIRTHDAY MISS HARIME, YOU ARE THE GREATEST PERSON IN THIS WORLD!" the clone grins happily.

"You really are super kind to me! No one ever said that to me!"

"Well TECHNICALLY you still haven't heard this from anyone yet! I did, but I don't count, because I am you and you are me and we both are best friends and uh wow, this talking makes me super duper dizzy, hihi! But that's okay! You only need me!"

"You are sooooo right! There should be more of me!"

"This is great! Lady Ragyo will be so super duper happy when she sees us! Imagine she has five little soon-to-be daughters! She is really going to be a happy mother when she finally takes you as her daughter!"

"Mhm!" Nui smiles. "But we do this tomorrow, okay!? I am really tired!"

"Okay! I'll keep an eye out for any evil intruders! I know you don't like sleeping alone but now I will always protect you!"

"Okay! Thank you! You are cool! I like you." Nui chuckles happily and cuddles back into her bed, knowing she has someone who thinks

like her. Finally, the loneliness has found its end. Finding a friend is truly a great feeling.

Wouldn't you count yourself as a friend too?

But the rain goes on. It never stops falling. It always falls. Each day. Each night. Each hour of her life. And finally, the memory vanishes and Ryuko arrives back in the dark halls, and suddenly, clones of Ryuko appear around her. Dozens of Ryuko's that praise her, as if she would have become just as narcissistic and selfish as Nui. They all look the same. The same eye colour, the same hair, the same body, the same Senketsu - perfect copies. It's raining in the halls. A single, quiet thunder can be heard. It doesn't stop anymore. It's raining. It always rains.

The Life Fibers have stopped singing. They've muted themselves. They're only watching. It's possible they symbolize the emotions Nui used to keep inside her, and the older the psychopath became, the weaker they became... and with that, less and less Life Fibers sung for her, until none were left. They stopped, and they won't come back. Ragyo killed her.

A red-orange shining Thread of Fate flows through the room and through the white Life Fiber that connects the memory with the dark halls. Nui watches Ryuko approaching. As Ryuko stands in front of Nui, the Thread of Fate moves around both of them and hovers into the air, eventually connecting their hearts together. Ryuko feels the desire to touch Nui's hand, and that she does, and Nui does the same. The orange Thread of Fate reappears.

Both have a connection to each other, when it comes to the Life Fibers.

"You think you are different than me." Nui says calm and somehow cold.

"..."

"Tzehe... look at you. Can't deny it. You'd love to kill me just as much as I'd love to kill everyone."

"..."

"Why... am I the evil one... when it clearly were the others?"

"..."

"Watch... how great Lady Ragyo made me."

Ryuko is sucked into the memory. Ryuko's desire to succumb to her emotions, to her bloodlust is getting stronger and stronger. By experiencing all these memories, it triggers something inside her. During her nightmares, there always was this hate for Nui, but now... now it feels totally real. Now it feels like Ryuko could finally kill a person. She is her little sister. But who cares?

Wasn't she the one who tried to destroy the world? Didn't she knew exactly what she was going for? Isn't it in the end Nui's fault that the world is the place it is today? What gives her the right to judge over humanity, just because a group of humans and Ragyo destroyed her life?

There is no excuse for this in Ryuko's mind... Nui cannot exist. She mustn't exist! She has to vanish, and Ryuko does not feel bad for that. What good deeds could even out destroying and terrifying the entire world? The Life Fiber Sickness exists. It's Ragyo's and Nui's legacy. And for that, she has to die.

A light appears. Nui is in a dark room. Around her are her clones, and they happily watch their mistress. Ragyo stands on the other side of the room, where the light shines. She stands behind some sort of showcase.

"My dear Nui..."

"Lady Ragyo..."

"How long do we know each other? Your life has turned so much better... and soon it will find it's climax. You are sublime. You are divine. You are free of sins... and you will make humanity pay for their deeds... on you... on the Life Fibers... and purify them, let them repent."

With shining eyes, Nui observes her mistress. Ragyo touches Nui's face as she comes closer to her, and finally, she walks to the side.

"Your dress, Nui. It's worthy for a Grand Couturier." Ragyo smiles. Inside the showcase is her pink dress. It looks so beautiful. How can Lady Ragyo just be so kind to Nui? She always was the best. No one would harm Nui in a dress like that. She carefully touches it - it feels so soft, so comfortable, and through it flows an energy she only knows from years ago when she killed humans for the first time.

"You... did this for me, Lady Ragyo?"

"You've earned it."

"Lady Ragyo, I... I am so... happy... my own dress..." and swiftly, Ragyo takes off Nui's clothes. The clones cover Nui's body while Ragyo helps her put on her dress. The dress fits perfectly. Nui moves her arms and legs, and during that, Ragyo shows her a mirror in which the young woman looks into.

Ryuko can see herself reflected in the mirror. It's thundering outside, and in the mirror, it's raining, yet Nui smiles, and Ryuko does the same. The humans don't know who they've been messing with the past ten years. And Nui is genuinely glad to know she can cause terror and anxiety towards humanity whenever she pleases to - after all, humanity deserves it. And for Ryuko, Nui does not deserve anything less than death. First her, now her Doppelgänger, then the High Entity, and if there is ANYONE who believes he could stand against Ryuko Matoi, then they will pay for that.

Everyone will pay.

Everyone.

...

Iori and Mikisugi speak to each other in the command center.

"I can't possibly imagine Nui betraying Ryuko." Mikisugi mentions. Iori shakes his head in disbelief.

"When I worked with Harime, she hasn't spoken about anyone else except Lady Satsuki and Ryuko. And rarely how competent I was at tailoring - I assume that's the sole reason why I am interesting for her."

"Something is wrong with Satsuki now that you mention her. She wants to destroy Neo-REVOCS with our zeppelin. It's insane. I don't know what to think of this and what she is hoping to accomplish by that yet, but if we cannot find any use out of that, we might have to find a way to cool down Satsuki. The entire situation with Ryuko and Nui must have hurt her even harder than one might expect."

"No doubt about that. Lady Satsuki is not herself. Her gaze reminds me of the old Director. She insists on me finishing her new armor... and I did that." Iori mentions and shows a drawing of the new armor.

On the drawing, Satsuki is visible with a new weapon. The armor seems to be an improved version of the Wrath regalia - the legs are covered with nothing but small threads all around them that go up to the knees. The hips are covered just enough to provide flexibility and covering the private parts. The gauntlets seem to be more flexible now and the inner gauntlet seemed to experience improvements for combat, which is most likely due to the new weapon Satsuki is using. From her breasts on is a new body armor that goes up to the shoulders and the upper arm, and up to the chin. As usual for Satsuki, the colours are white and blue, and the shoulder armor has a longer cape that goes to the knees. In a note regarding the cape it's stated that it can provide simple life support, meaning an attack that might kill Satsuki can be reversed due to the Life Fibers that will

hold the wound together until Satsuki can be medically aided. Having a second chance during battle will be quite useful.

Lastly, and this is the most interesting thing, her new weapon seems to not be her Katana, "Empress Blade," but a long spear-like weapon similar to the Japanese Naginata, except that both ends of the spear have blades. These blades are most likely forged out of her original weapon, and with Junketsu inside the blades, it's well possible this weapon, while it cannot sever Life Fibers, stop their regeneration for a short moment. It won't kill them likely, but it certainly is an improvement.

Mikisugi nods agreeing to this. Suddenly, a transmission appears on the monitor. It's Masaru. Both Nudist Beach member are fairly surprised.

"Isn't this...?" Iori mumbles.

"... apologies, I don't have much time, this message is recorded... you have to get over here soon. I'm preparing a sabotage on the Neo-REVOCS HQ but I cannot do this on my own. I know you can't trust me but I can help getting Matoi out of here and hurt this Doppelgänger. You've received some of our most important secrets recently by the Grand Couturier, and I want to make up for the things I did. There is the advertisement center in Nagoya, in it, you can get access to our global news channel and manipulate the ads we are playing around the world every day.

In said center, we also censor whenever something isn't going as we want, we used it back in the days during Miss Kiryuins reign and nowadays as well - if you can get access to it and somehow digitalize the intel I've sent, you can effectively eliminate Neo-REVOCS entire reputation entirely. If it wasn't already severely damaged before, it will be destroyed now. I'd do it all myself but no one except the Director and his Couturiers gain access to the advertisement center, meaning it's well protected. My Ashigaru are not capable of defeating Couturiers and their alien origins, but you... you guys could do that... please, you somehow have to help, you

can save Matoi and I can help you if..." and the transmission is interrupted. This was most likely Houka's new security system that defends from intruders.

"... I suppose the zeppelin might make sense now." the Nudist Beach boss mentions...

...

It's raining outside. Battle sounds arise. Ryuko appears back in Nui's body...

... inside the Matoi mansion. Nui stands on Isshin Matoi's dying body, smiling happily down to him as she pierces the scissor blades even further into him. Ryuko experiences pure happiness and luck with Nui, as her hate for humans is nurtured by the sadism she developed toward the very species that made her go insane. And someone like Isshin Matoi does not deserve a fast death, not after everything he did with his strange organisation of naked idiots - Lady Ragyo despises all of them. It makes Lady Ragyo happy knowing Nui follows all her wishes and desires, and killing Dr. Matoi is something Nui isn't just doing just like that - killing people for Ragyo is an honor. A door slams open and Nui is distracted.

Still, what could happen to her? Isshin is about to die, and Nui has retrieved the secret weapon he was working on. Besides, Nui is superior to every human, and if...

Nui feels pain as her eye is ripped open and severed into thousand parts.

HOW COULD HE!?

HOW COULD HE CUT OUT HER EYE!? HAS HE GONE MAD!? WHO DOES THIS WORTHLESS HUMAN THINK HE IS THAT HE COULD HURT SUCH A DIVINE AND SUBLIME BEING!? SHE HATES IT! SHE HATES IT! SHE HATES IT! SHE HATES IT! THIS INSANE MONSTER REALLY TRIES TO HARM NUI!?"

Nui rips the other part of the scissor blade out of Isshin Matoi and escapes the building by jumping out of the window. In the sky, a firework out of lightnings appears. Every few seconds, a thunder rings out, the rain feels harsh and hurts, it feels deadly yet it is not, every drop onto her body burns like hell, and the blood that flows out of her eye socket just doesn't want to stop! How could he hit her with such an nearly perfect cut!? Nui CANNOT be hurt! How can she just be hurt?! Wounded, the young psychopath runs through the mansion garden and arrives at an open field near the forest, where she lets off of her bleeding severe wound, and seeing her own blood on her hand.

Nui screams mad. And Ryuko does the same inside her. How could Nui even believe she could kill Ryuko's dad!? Who the hell does she think he is!? Nui will pay for this! This cursed whore! She has to pay! There is no other way! This worthless monster needs to be culled from the world! Nui falls onto her knees and looks to the ground, the rain falls onto her back.

Was it really raining that day?

What has the rain to do with all of this?

Does it represent Nui's feelings? Did the weather burned into her head ever since so much that Nui only perceives the world in ever lasting rain, and snow? Only in rainfall, where Nui knows exactly her tears are covered, and her weaknesses? Now it doesn't matter anymore. She can be hurt. She can be touched, still. It was for nothing. It only makes the rain even worse.

Then again, who cares? Nui killed dad! Nui has to die! Simple as that! Why care for a sad past?! Who are the Life Fibers trying to screw over?! This has to be Hinatas work! He only wants Ryuko to feel bad for Nui, of course he wants to, the Life Fibers must have planned this!

"LADY RAGYO WILL HATE ME! SHE WILL HATE SEEING ME LIKE THIS! LADY RAGYO CANNOT BUT HATE ME! I HATE HUMANS!

ALL OF THEM! VERMIN! WORTHLESS VERMIN! WHY CAN'T THEY JUST DIE ALREADY!?"

The thunder is getting louder and worse. Is the world sinking? No matter how much Nui tries to regenerate her wound, it doesn't want to disappear, even though it takes two blades to stop the regeneration. Is it her own twisted, destroyed mind that forces Nui to keep the wound to herself? At least this is how it feels for Ryuko!

Nui starts laughing desperately, slamming her head onto the ground, covering with mud that is mixed up with her burning wound.

"... I'm not insane... no... no I'm not insane... the-they are... humans are insane... they all are insane, but not me, oh no, I'm not insane... I'm perfectly fine... hehe..." she mumbles.

"... I'm not insane... no... no, I'm not insane... she is... but me?... no no no, I cannot be insane, it's Nui, she's the crazy one..." Ryuko mumbles. Puddles appear around Nui, and in one of them, she reflects her face. There, she can see her burning wound. Blood still leaves it. Life Fibers crawl through it, some of them fidget around in the desperate attempt to somehow be connected, but they died, due to Nui's mind, not because of the scissor blade. Nui can't but smile at it - and Ryuko does the same.

Always go through the world with a smile. That's what Lady Ragyo said. There is no need to cry.

Just smile.

You'll kill all of them eventually.

The memory dissolves and Ryuko falls back into the dark halls. Around her, Ryuko's clones turn to her, and they all have only one eye left as well while grinning at Ryuko obsessed. Ryuko's clones wear the same dress like Nui, but in red. The seemingly endlessly distant walls appear to let water and blood flow down everywhere.

Ryuko in her Life Fiber Being form appears different as well - she only has one eye left. The right one is still there. Is that how it feels like? Having only one eye left? Being revealed as weak, as imperfect? Does Lady Ragyo hate her now? For the rest of her life? When Ryuko approaches the next Memory Fiber... she can see the Honnouji Academy. Sanageyama and Ryuko stand in front of each other, and Nui seems to look up to Satsuki. Ryuko enters the memory and is back inside Nui's twisted mind.

She pouts as she looks up to Satsuki. They're a heart and a soul. Ryuko and Sanageyama obviously do not know who this girl is, but Satsuki knows her perfectly well. After all, they know each other since their childhood - and Satsuki hasn't told Nui once again how much fun she has in the Academy.

It's so mean of Satsuki. Satsuki never tells Nui anything. Satsuki has to hate Nui. It's mean. Nui never did anything to her. Whenever Nui says something she really means it towards Satsuki, after all, both of them were raised in the same house. More respect would be appreciated, as well as kindness. Nui however doesn't even dislike this form of behaviour anymore. Satsuki always keeps the fun in her life to herself even though Nui knows herself how she can make things fun, in her own, sadistic, cruel ways.

Every single word that comes out of her mouth is pure, genuine, paradox love for Satsuki. Satsuki never liked Nui, but that's why Nui likes her so much. The people that hate Nui the most are the ones she appreciates the most, since they all only confirm what Nui believes and what Ragyo always told her. Everyone hates her, and she loves to be hated, it's the only time she gains attention. Their hate is something she can use to her advantage, and seeing Ryuko getting mad over Nui killing her father is funny as hell - who would have thought it can be so easy annoying someone? Seriously, it's hilarious to see Ryuko being angry.

Nui always knows how to provoke. She knows how to animate people to do something. People like Nui simply do. Psychopaths do. Still, even with all the tragic past in mind, Nui, at last, is a

psychopath, and she can be extremely dangerous. Even if Nui has "good" intentions for Ryuko and Satsuki and even if she loves to have them around her, it will not change the fact she is manipulative and ice cold towards humans... but Nui isn't stupid either. Nui can learn, if you can animate her to do so. Someone like Ryuko or Satsuki could help her be a better person.

But why would you save someone who doesn't deserve to be redeemed? Nui can only be hated, and it's well deserved. Nui has to die. There cannot be any other way anymore.

God, Ryuko hates her so much. Nui should have never returned. Ichiro should have killed her a long time ago. It's disgusting being in a body like this.

"WHY CAN'T IT STOP!?" Ryuko yells.

...

"You want to tell me this Yamamoto contacted us to save Ryuko?!" Satsuki asks annoyed Mikisugi and Iori. Gamagoori, Nonon and the others are in the same room, listening to the conversation.

"The message has been caught by my systems. I've listened to it. It's true. The message came from Neo-REVOCS and tracing it back allowed me to find out that he hacked into the systems - interesting how he has to hack his own security systems to avoid evidence." Houka mentions cool.

"Ryuko..."

Sanageyama shrugs. "I mean, we could visit them with this weird ass zeppelin... but then we'll have to time our attack properly and who says this ain't a trap?" and Tsumugu reacts.

"I don't mind. We'll take down Neo-REVOCS in one single strike. It'll teach the Life Fibers who they've been messing with. The zeppelin will sustain the damage." and with that, Satsuki decides to really

consider such an attack. To be fair, the offensive and defensive systems of the zeppelin are strong enough to survive an attack, and the attack on the facility itself is a risk you can calculate, yet you'd have to be careful still - Ryuko can always be hurt. Mikisugi is unsure.

"We should prepare a Plan B in case things go south. Do we still have access to the building, Houka?"

"Partially."

"And how long will it take to prepare the zeppelin for an attack?" Satsuki asks impatient. Mikisugi thinks briefly - the others are clearly unsure what to do.

(AN: If you want to, go to YouTube and type down "DEFCON Game Soundtrack". There is a 32 minute long soundtrack video - it'll fit for what comes now. I'm sorry for what will happen. I really am. It hurt my soul.)

"If I'll tell the men to get everything ready the zeppelin is ready this evening and should arrive a few hours from then on." he answers. Tsumugu likes the idea and puts on a cigarette to that, but as he uses it, the door opens and Nui appears, and the cigarette falls out of his mouth.

"You have nerves to walk into this room..." Tsumugu mumbles surprised. Most of the group turn around and notice the emotionally unstable woman. Only Satsuki does not turn around.

"Nui?" Iori reacts worried. Coming back here wasn't a good idea.

"... is Ryuko here?" Nui asks. She appears pining. Interpreting into her face, one might find a feeling of regret, if distant, but it's there. Satsuki closes her eyes. Her hands are attached onto the desk, then, she breathes in and out via the nose. When the psychopath musters her allies, she realises a large part of them seem to appear neutral or hostile to her.

"Why... are you looking at me like this? Isn't she here?"

No one answers. Some people, like Nonon or Gamagoori observe Nui with a judging face expression. Iori and Mikisugi are rather worried. Satsuki turns around with a calm face expression.

"Was this your plan all along?" Satsuki asks cold.

"Saving Ryuko? Yes. Weren't you the one who oppressed her and her opinion?"

"And in exchange for that, you... bring her to this insane man... avenge your death and your arms... and you come back as if nothing ever happened?"

"So she is not here?"

It's obvious Satsuki tries to keep her cool, but she already bit her teeth in her closed mouth, and her gaze is... different. It reminds of Lady Ragyo's cold, observing gaze.

"She is still at Neo-REVOCS?" Nui asks.

"Houka."

Briefly after, Houka plays the message Ichiro send. Ryuko's arms are gone. Her legs are gone. Her face is tormented.

It breaks Nui's heart. It really does. The only time it genuinely breaks her heart - seeing her big sister. Nui failed.

As always. It's never good enough. And she will receive punishment. Not even a psychopath like her can take this.

"... no, no no..."

"You are such a hypocrit. You liar. You manipulate humans into thinking they are on your side and when the time comes you destroy all of this trust to get away with your twisted plans! And you did this

with Ryuko! You were out for revenge all the time. That's why you sided with us, right? That's why you pretended to be sad whenever you had the chance to, yes?! Because you know how to get people on your side, if necessary!

And I trusted you... for once, in all these years, I trust you this one time... and you take my sister away. I trusted you and this trust blinded me into seeing an honorable if questionable woman, yet all you are is a monster."

"Monster?" Nui asks.

"Now you dare to come back here. Why? To tell me right into the face what you did? Because you want to tell me how relieving it felt taking my sisters arms and legs, just like she did back then with your arms?"

... couldn't you have just killed her at least? Couldn't you have spared her from this torture and kill her directly? Now... she's somewhere in this complex... tortured to death... and she has to live her life as a disfigured human, if it comes that far."

"Satsuki, you know I didn't do this. You know I'd never hurt you or Ryuko."

"Oh you wouldn't? You wouldn't betray those on your side? You wouldn't take any revenge? Weren't you the one who yelled at Ryuko full of hatred when she took your arms, and with that, your only purpose in life? To live as clothing, to embrace the thought of being worn by becoming this very thing?"

"This isn't fair, Satsuki. This was... a long time ago! I remember the burning wounds still, but if I start taking revenge for everything people did to me then I'll go... insane? You look at me and think I'm the crazy one here but I'm not! I don't want to be crazy! I already lost Hoomaru! I don't want to lose you too now!"

"You didn't lost me because you never won me in the first place!"
Satsuki answers loud and approaches Nui, no one intervenes.

"You believe you are part of this family even though there isn't a SINGLE drop of Kiryuin blood in you! You're not part of this family nor would you have ANY right to be part of it! All you are is a cold blooded, disgusting parasite that sneaked into my family to seek a mother that never wanted you! You pretend to be a innocent little girl but the truth is you only wanted to impress mother!"

"I wanted a family, yes, Satsuki, what's wrong about that?!"

"You don't deserve one."

"And who are you to judge over me, huh!?" Nui asks insulted.

"Have you ever tried to understand me?"

"Why would I try to understand someone who doesn't even understand himself?"

"My whole life I'm pushed away by everyone! I'm being tortured and hurt, people hate me, humans hurt me, make fun of me, EVEN KILL ME and NO ONE GIVES A FRICKIN FUCK!" Nui screams.

Everyone is quiet.

"Do you think I chose all of that?! I only wanted a family! I only wanted a mama, a papa, or a sibling! I'm alone the entire time. I don't regret what I did years ago but I'd do EVERYTHING if you forgive me still. Everyone just ignores me, and now, where I have the chance to make up for it, by helping you all out, I'm still being yelled and looked down at!" Nui continues and tries to hold tears back.

"You ignore me the moment you know me! You know exactly I wasn't like this back then! I just wanted to be friends with you because you were as old as me! But it never occurred to you to interact with me. You thought I am a slave to-to-to what, clothing?! Hahaha, y-you

know what?! Maybe I was! But I know now who I am and what I am capable of.

I don't want to be a monster! I don't want to be an alien! And I... I don't want to be clothing. I just want to be friends with you. You don't have to like me but at least, please please please, please just accept I am here on this world! I am not insane! I never did anything bad to you until you forced me to! I never hurted you until you started it! You even lied when I only wanted to play with you! It's unfair! Why am I always the monster?!" Nui asks and looks to the group.

"If it weren't for humans who made me the way I am! You too! And mama too! And I still try to make it better! I hate humans so much! Whenever I think of them, I'd... I'd like to hurt them!

BUT I DO MY VERY BEST TO NOT HURT ANYONE HERE!" Nui screams and looks into Satsuki's cold eyes. Nui's pulse rises.

She can hear a thunder in her head.

"Rather would I switch all the Threads and Fibers in my body to be human for at least a SINGLE second! I'd rip out all of them if I could! At least for one moment.

But I can't. I can't be a human. I can only try to be one. I gave this musician my clones! I gave this Samurai a clone! My clones do maintenance every night to make sure everything is cleaned up! And during combat I'll help as good as I can! I hate humans so, so unbelievably much. You... you guys force me to do things I don't want to do. My clones do all the work. I feel bad for them because they are my friends... and they need to do all of this. They don't have any fun doing that, they don't feel any joy, they just sit there and do their jobs...

... but if it makes you happy, Satsuki, Mikisugi, Sanageyama, Gamagoori... if it makes all of you happy and if you for once then listen to me, I'd embarass myself again... I don't want to go back into this dark room... I don't... it's so dark and cold there..."

No one answers.

"WHY ISN'T ANYONE SAYING ANYTHING!?"

"..."

"HAVEN'T I DONE EVERYTHING I COULD!?"

"..."

"... it's never enough. Never. I just want a family... nothing more."
she mumbles and takes a deep breath. Two tears leave her eyes. No one knows what to say.

"... why is no one saying anything..."

"You don't deserve a family. Nor friends. Only a quick end to your misery. That, I agree on. I would do it now... but I can't. You are a parasite among us humans. Nothing more than living clothing."

Mikisugi and Iori had enough.

"Lady Satsuki, that's enough!" Iori interrupts Satsuki.

"You may be right, Harime is a dangerous person and it's advised to be careful when close to her. But I would be a hypocrite myself if I'd say she wouldn't support me when I seriously needed her help. She is unfriendly and sassy, but when it comes to the worst, she helps me out. I don't believe she would hurt your sister, especially after what she just said. Whenever we were working together, she spoke about you and Ryuko. She spoke about how much she admires both of you, she once even said she looks up to you and wishes to make you happy one day." Iori empowers Nui's words.

"Harime cried when she escaped with Ryuko. I couldn't stop them anymore... but I was able to talk with her briefly. Satsuki, think about it. I'll be on your side, no matter what happens, and Life Fiber is Life Fiber... but your father once believed some Life Fibers can be friends... and she wants to be one, even with her mental flaws."

Tsumugu shakes his head hearing Mikisugis words.

"Friend or not, we should punish her. Why don't we put her into her room? Haven't you burned it down with a flame thrower? It must be pretty dark and lonely there, it would be a good punishment until we have the scissor blades and Matoi back."

Nonon raises her eyebrows in disgust.

"Are you kidding me?! This girl cried her soul out and you just think she should go into a room she considers the worst nightmare she could live through?!"

"Harime has to repent, Jakuzure." Gamagoori says.

"From a logical standpoint, it might make sense imprisoning her, but not for punishment. We don't have any evidence - we only have the words of a man who is ten times worse than his Doppelgänger. If someone is lying, then it's clearly the Doppelgänger and not her. I'd say we lock her up in a normal room where she can live until this dispute has been solved." Houka mentions.

"I'VE HAD ENOUGH!" Satsuki yells angry.

"Tsumugu, lock her in her room! Throw the key away and weld the door together! She'll only leave this room again to attend her final walk!"

"Satsuki, please! This is unfair! I haven't done anything! I was hoping Ryuko can escape! It was my fault that I couldn't help her more, but I had to protect her friend Mako, it was her wish! What should I have done!?"

"You should end your life right now in front of my eyes to spare me from additional pain!" Satsuki screams and walks to the side. Nonon and Sanageyama are shocked. Iori can't believe what is going on.

This hurts Nui.

"Fuck you, Satsuki."

...

She turns around.

"Say again?"

"Fuck you. I love you so much, but at the same time I hate you. Why are you saying something like this? WHY ARE YOU SO MEAN TO ME!?" she asks desperate. Satsuki punches Nui into her face. Nui defends herself, forms a fist and hits Satsuki's nose, causing her to fall onto the ground, with some blood splattering on the ground. Nui walks a few steps back.

"I-I I'm sorry S-Satsuki! I didn't mean to hurt you!" Nui implores. Tsumugu grabs Nui's hair tightly and throws the psychopath onto the ground. She moans but doesn't defend herself. People will hate her anyway, she knows that. What does Love and Hate mean anyway anymore? It's just a lie. Just like her entire life.

She'd kill Tsumugu if she could. Her hate for him is unbearable, and yet she takes it all... just like years ago. Tsumugu and Gamagoori arrive at Nui's room and throw the young woman into the burned, black area.

Everything is black. Everything destroyed. It stinks like burned furniture. Dead Life Fibers are on the ground that once were Nui's clones.

There is but a small little light under the door. Nothing more. Nui tries to open the door but it looks like Gamagoori is on the other side. Forming her arms into blades doesn't help either - the door won't open up. She's imprisoned here.

She knows this situation already. Just go to your corner and whimper. No one will listen anyway. There is only the orange Thread

of Fate she once got from the Couturier. It lightens up the room a few centimeters.

"... I don't want to be alone..."

...

Ichiro smiles. The Thread of Fate must give him information about Nui's mental and physical state. The man drags another Thread of Fate out of it and speaks to himself, certain of his victory, his plans going well.

"Ryuko and Satsuki hate their own little sister and I can't blame them. Being tortured all the time by her ghost and her legacy really must make someone insane. Well... you, my little friend, you'll help Ryuko send her little sister back into hell. She should be grateful for that. All the nightmares humanity has to suffer... and they all are controlled by my Threads of Fate.

Ryuko is certainly in a bad mood. It would be a shame if something triggers her to... destroy Nui's mind. Ehe... ehehehehe..."

...

"I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!" Nui screams as blood leaves her shoulders. Ryuko took her arms with the scissor blades. Panic goes through Nui's body. Hate, pain, happiness, insecurity, perplexity, somewhere love, but right now, Nui would do everything to make this dirty whore Ryuko is pay! How could she, haha, disarm her!? Disarm! DISARM! DOES RYUKO EVEN KNOW WHAT SHE DID!? WHAT PAIN SHE IS SUFFERING RIGHT NOW?!

The blood fountain is getting larger and larger, and when her arms dissolve and Ryuko starts making fun of that, it's like the world has sunken into an endless night, and the rain cannot be stopped.

Ryuko is such a crazy girl. She can't just hurt her soul sister like that! Well okay, she killed their dad. So? You can't just hurt your soul sister for that! Ryuko must be the evil one here, of course!

The memory dissolves abruptly, it doesn't continue, it just stops! When Ryuko arrives back in the dark halls and feels the rain on her body, she notices her arms are gone too! Her clones laugh at her, all of them having no arms anymore. Blood leaves their wounds, filling the halls with it like a bucket. The room flickers, the blood boils, the Life Fibers sing in tortured voices, and without being able to do five steps forward, Ryuko is sucked to the last memory, seeing Nui without her arms, smiling at Ryuko.

"YOU ALWAYS SAY I SHOULD DIE! HOW ABOUT YOU EXPERIENCE DEATH YOURSELF!?" Nui asks. Life Fibers drag Ryuko into the memory.

...

Honnouji-Academy, Evening. Shinra Koketsu is done, Ragyo's plan almost fulfilled. Nudist Beach is sieging the Academy - Nui's COVERS and her clones defend the building and their mistress Lady Ragyo, and only thanks to her, Nui has gotten arms back - they are black and shine colorful. Real arms feel much better, no doubt about it. These truly feel like clothing, stitched on the wounds Nui suffered from before. Like cotton or wool hanging on your body. It must be enough. Still, they do their job. And while Nui's clones and herself fight against Nudist Beach, Ryuko and Satsuki seriously try to kill their mother!

The sky is so beautiful. All the rain. All the lightnings.

Who would dare to destroy your own creator on this day? How could anyone dare to destroy their own mother? Nui knows exactly Ragyo loves her! She gave her new arms! A new chance! Ragyo never gives someone a new chance! But she gave Nui one! She MUST love Nui! There is no other way! Nui is the true daughter of Ragyo Kiryuin! Ragyo Kiryuin ADORES NUI, AND NUI ADORES RAGYO! It

was destined to be like that! Ragyo never was her physical mother, but she has to love Nui! She has to! She wouldn't use her as a tool! She never would! No, no, no! She loves her! She would...

"Nui!"

Nui looks to her supposed mother. She's split into four parts.

It hurts.

"Cast your body away!"

...

Ragyo loves Nui.

She always did.

Nui can make Ragyo happy, just like Ragyo made Nui happy.

A deed like that would finally make Nui become a part of this happy family.

"Oui, Maman!" she smiles happily and forms her arms into blades. Ryuko feels ten thousands of emotions driving through Nui's mind in seconds, but out of all these emotions, love, happiness and luck are the dominating ones. No more fear from the pain of death. No more fear from the end of life. No more fear from what comes after... if there is something to come.

Mama needs to be happy.

And so, Nui decapitates herself with a quick slash, and a happy laughter, in the belief this is the final deed she had to accomplish to become the daughter of Ragyo Kiryuin. Happiness fills Nui's head as her body dissolves and her head slowly flies into the original Life Fiber. Her clones do the same thing. They want to experience this luck.

The decapitated head burns like hell and beyond. A far cry for air, for breath fills Nui's mind, the desire to stick the head on something. Ryuko wants to vomit. Ryuko wants to scream. The pain is indescribable. It hurts. It's indescribable. It's indescribable. Indescribable.

Descend into your own madness, into your end. Everything lets Ryuko drive insane.

It hurts so much.

But it's the right thing. Nui can make her mama finally happy, truly happy. Nui knows she is part of this family now. She never has to be alone anymore. As her head flies into the entrance, stings rise up and the entrance closes. Her vision is turning orange, red, everything is getting incredibly cold and warm, switching the temperatures in seconds, the colours in Nui's eye blur out, the brain slowly dies due to the lack of air... but it was the right thing. Finally.

Nui closes her eye. Darkness ascends. A shard of personality stays back to support the original Life Fiber and her mama, but her spirit, her ghost, Nui herself... is going back into the dark halls, her origin. After all this time... after all the pain... it's over. The last image Nui can see is her own Thread of Fate.

It's hovering in the darkness. Nui sings her last words.

"Finally..."

"... a..."

"... family..."

One last breath.

The Fiber tears apart. Darkness.

Nui is dead.

...

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A thunder rings out.

Ryuko appears all of a sudden in the forest of Nagoya, wearing Senketsu. Around her... sadness. Loneliness. She looks up to the sky. White and orange Fibers hold the memory together. They are hidden behind the dark clouds.

A girl is crying. Ryuko slowly stomps through the forest with Senketsu, walks over the mud and finds a dead man. In the foreground, the fourteen year old Nui sits there, in the pond, lonely, forgotten, unprotected. Water flows down Ryuko's face, her hair is fully soaked, Senketsu is forced to close his eye partially... Nui is whimpering... and chuckles forcefully. Laughing and crying isn't far away from each other.

Sometimes, in desperatation, all you can do is start laughing. And some are corrupted by that. Ryuko is herself again. Without Nui's

feelings. Just the good old Ryuko.

"Nui?" Ryuko asks her little sister. She stops laughing and looks up to Ryuko. Tears flow out of the little girl's eyes.

"Ry-uko...?"

Ryuko doesn't know what to say.

It's her little sister. And she knows she is a monster.

Does she even deserve love?

After killing these people? After tasting blood, after swearing herself she will obey Ragyo until death? Does she deserve friendliness?

...

No pity for this insane girl. Ryuko swore to avenge her father.

Nui tries to hug Ryuko to receive a feeling of protection yet Ryuko pushes her away. The girl falls into the mud, the blood on the dress mixes up with it.

"Ow... that..."

"I can't... let you alive." Ryuko says ice cold. Rain rolls down her face. She doesn't change her face expression. That's how ice cold Ryuko is towards Nui. That's how much she hates Nui.

"... but... Ryuko, I..."

"No but! You're going to destroy all of humanity!... I'm sorry... what Ragyo did wasn't right... but... what you will do... I gotta do this." and so, Ryuko turns around. Nui follows her.

"Ryuko, please wait..." Nui begs desperate. A white Life Fiber appears.

"Please let me go with you! You.. you are my big sister, please!" she continues and is kicked down.

"Maybe!" Ryuko answers and arrives at the Fiber.

"But you killed dad! And humans ! And you caused a part of this world to live in nightmares! I ain't gonna let you get away with that!"

The little Nui just sits there in the mud, looking up to her sister. Ryuko watches how she just turns her head onto the ground.

There's nothing left to say.

Ryuko leaves the forest and dissolves, leaving Nui alone in the darkness.

...

Back in the dark halls, Ryuko transforms back into her Life Fiber Being form. Hinata has left from the looks of it. He always comes back to talk with Ryuko.

Has Ryuko scared him away? Was it Ichiro who found out about Hinata? Or is this another twisted game from the Life Fibers? There is one last memory left. Arriving at the last memory, she can see herself as a child. Suddenly, something touches her... and it's not Hinata.

The Nui from her nightmares, with her black Life Fibers arms, and the obsessed smile stands in front of her. The Life Fiber sickness... personified as Nui Harime.

"Hate and love are two sides of the same coin. It's like a finely-tailored suit with a good sturdy stitching. In other words, the deeper the hatred, the deeper the love grows."

Ryuko remembers these words. Nui told them once. Strange to see how... she was right.

"You love to hate me. And I hate to love you. You have no clue how much I hate you. But I can only smile when I see you. And you can only hate me when you see me."

"..."

"You and me, Ryuko, we both always were supposed to meet each other. You know Ryuko... I envy you."

"..."

"You got what I never had. You... took my family away... I should be the one who should be loved... I should be the one with friends, and a big sister, and a dad... but here I am... just... I'm just here..."

"... fuck you."

"... ehehehe... how about we both... settle our dispute... once and for all?... only you and me... back to where it all began... and whoever dies... is gone forever... you could kill me... and kill me in the real world... my mind would break apart..."

"..."

"Don't you want to know... how it's like being the parasite inside someone's head? Don't you just want to rip me open, purify me of all the Life Fibers inside me and send me into oblivion? I can see it in your eyes, Ryuko."

Ryuko turns into her human form.

"You are just like me... you are obsessed with me... and I am obsessed with you. And it's so beautiful. I can't even laugh about you anymore. Can't even smile. I can only... watch you... torture you... take your girlfriend away, and how much fun it was... but I want you to finish me off... or maybe I finish you off? Who knows...?"

Nui grabs Ryuko's shoulders.

"Come, Ryuko... let us end this eternal nightmare we both live through... strike me down like you always wanted to... and don't hold back, love."

"..."

A Thread of Fate appears next to them. A sinister face expression fulfills Ryuko. Nui learns with her head forward, almost touching Ryuko's nose with her own.

"You wouldn't hurt your little sister, would you?"

"I'll tear you apart."

"... until you cry..."

Ryuko and Nui dissolve and develop a Life Fiber Sickness inside Nui's head. Hinata appears and approaches the Thread of Fate where he can see Nui's shattered mind, where it's raining entirely.

There is a mirror in it with the burning Matoi Mansion.

"Choose wisely, young Matoi. Some battles... should not be won."

...

AN: I think everything has been said.

The next chapter will come fairly soon, I promise. It's the chapter I was looking forward the most to. It's gonna be brutal - it's the most brutal chapter in the story. Thanks for reading this long chapter and be sure to leave a review, I think there's plenty to talk about today. Now:

... prepare yourself for Chapter 24: KILLlaKILL.

KILLlaKILL

AN: This was quick, right? I've been looking forward to this chapter the most ever since I started writing this story. I won't say anything. See for yourself what will happen. Have fun reading. I teared up when writing it. That's all I'm going to say.

Soichiro's voice halls.

"Ryuko..."

...

"I know you are afraid of being alone. But you will have to face this fear one day. This one... and those that come after. The day will come where we will see us again. And when this day comes, you will be a strong woman. Then, Ryuko, you will understand why I did the things I have to do."

Steps hall through the darkness. A white Life Fiber is visible in the distance. Rain and fire seem to be inside it. Around the Fiber, red rifts are scattered across the halls of a mind full of tragic memories.

"I've been hiding for a long time from people I once loved. I did many mistakes in my life. And I will do more. One day, the shadows of my past will reach me. Those shadows will reach you too - and when they come, I know you will feel ready for them."

Inside the white Life Fiber, the Matoi mansion of the year 2025 is visible. It's raining there.

"The things I do will be wrong, and quite frankly, if I am considered a bad person, then I accept that fate. They will be hostile towards humanity. I know, you don't understand what I am saying... but I know you will remember these words. A human like you... does not forget so easily. You are much more than what you believe to be... and I am, and always will be proud of you."

Ryuko touches the Memory Fiber.

"But until that day comes, on which you will understand why you have to go... you will feel alone. But I promise you..."

Ryuko dissolves into Nui's memory.

...

"You are not alone. No one has to be alone.

Never."

...

A loud thunder rings out. A lightning brightens up the dark cloudy sky. Steps come closer towards the path of the Matoi mansion.

Ryuko stands there, with her black jacket. Her hair is soaked with the rain and hangs down onto her face, the eyes are partially covered. There aren't any emotions left in her eyes. No empathy. Only a target to accomplish. Around Ryuko, nothing but sadness and coldness is left. The pond under her boots fills up with more water. In her right hand, she can feel an inhuman power, capable of changing the memory as she pleases. Life Fibers hover in the sky and watch Ryuko.

She continues to step up the path to the mansion.

"There's nothing that can stop you anymore, my love!"

...

"Only you and me! When you kill her... her mind will break, and she'll die a cruel brain death! Puff. Ehehehehe! And she will notice everything you do!"

...

There was a time where Ryuko was a tough young teenager seeking the murderer of her father, and in her ambition of finding that murderer, she found a family - both it's good and bad sides. With Satsuki, she found a sister, a sister she never believed to have. In Mako she found a friend she loved. And in Senketsu the first friend who truly was always on her side despite his inhuman needs. In all these years, Ryuko felt alone, hopelessly alone, trusting no one who came closer to her, and hurt people if she had to. Outside, she was a mean teenager, inside, she was not a bad person - just one who lost track of the path she should travel. But one thing she never managed to do:

Killing the one who took her father.

And it took her the love for Mako, and her freedom of living the way she wanted to. There was not a single night in all these years without dreaming of how Ryuko never managed to defeat the murderer. Eternal darkness spread across Earth, and it is Ryuko's and Satsuki's fault.

But she won't make this mistake again. There is no escape. Today, blood will flow - today, she will defeat the murderer of her father.

Today, she will kill someone, for the first time in her life.

...

Nui stands on the dying Isshin Matoi, ramming the scissor blades into his body, without any sense for remorse. Isshin deserved it. Every human deserves to die. After all, they started their cruel game with her. Just as Nui is about to execute Isshin, the door behind her is slammed open. Nui turns around.

Ryuko does not say anything.

"Ryuko?" Nui asks perplexed. She is fully aware of what is happening.

"What... are you doing here?"

"Something I should have done a long time ago."

Followed up by that, Isshin rips open Nui's left eye. Nui screams painfully and tears apart Isshin's body with the other part of the scissor blade, lethally wounding him. As Nui tries to flee to end the memory, Ryuko moves her right hand up, Life Fibers appear, and suddenly, the windows are barricaded with hardened Life Fibers. Nothing can sever them. Nui turns around shocked while Isshin tries to keep his wounds closed, with the first part of the scissor blade on his right.

Nui knows what is going on here. Ryuko can see her destroyed eye. It's a gaze most cruel. As if her eye would have splattered open, and parasites started feasting on her. Blood leaves her eye socket. Ryuko has come to break her mind - and by killing Nui and altering the memory with her parasitoid powers as Life Fiber Sickness, she can sever the Life Fibers in the sky that keep the memory together, and ultimately kill her. An action like this would cause an irreparable reaction inside her brain, overburdening it and eventually killing her.

"Ryuko..." Nui says careful. She does not even watch Isshin anymore, yet she still keeps her scissor blade ready. Isshin tries to stand up, however, he is unable to and crawls his way next to the wall and to Ryuko. His gaze says enough. Nui has to pay for this. Slowly, Ryuko picks up Isshin's scissor blade.

"I won't let you go anymore. Never again."

"Ryuko, we are sisters... I know you hate me... but you can't change it." Nui pleads. Ryuko holds the scissor blade even tighter.

(AN: Listen to "NeLL na KiKu" from the KILL la KILL Ost. It fits here well.)

"There ain't no pity for you." Ryuko answers and charges at Nui with her scissor blade. Nui jumps to the side, holds her scissor blade in a

defensive position however - she doesn't want to attack Ryuko. Ryuko slams her scissor blade into her direction, Nui ducks down. Both of them have to try to acquire each others scissor blade, no matter the cost. Ryuko misses the attack and destroys the large shelf behind Nui which falls into several parts. Isshin coughs blood.

"Willingly killing dad is sick enough but filling the world with monsters like you is still not good enough?! You'd rather haunt my damn mind, huh!?"

"What are you talking about!?"

"You know exactly what I am talking about, Bitch!" Ryuko yells. Nui attempts a slash attack on Ryuko, she misses however, Ryuko is able to slam her legs away. Nui does fall onto the ground but as Ryuko tries to sever her hand, Nui throws with her empty hand a clone to Ryuko which jumps onto her to stun her. Nui stands up and flees from the library. The clone tries to grab Ryuko's scissor blade, however, Ryuko is able to kick Nui's Doppelgänger off of her and rips it into thousands of little parts. Her father makes his last breaths.

"... remember... what... I said... Ryuko..."

"I'll avenge you, dad. I promise."

"... do... what you believe... to be the right... thing..."

Ryuko chases Nui and leaves her dad in the library.

"NUI!" Ryuko yells angry.

Nui is hiding in the lower floor of the mansion. The old Matoi mansion is nothing compared to what it is today. Old, cold halls that remind of a 15th century building dominate the largest part of Ryuko's home. Nui sneaks through the halls carefully and finds Isshin's working room. Shelves with folders and books, showcases with Life Fibers and blueprints are everywhere. The psychopath tries to find an exit, however, it seems like all ways out of the mansion are

blocked with Life Fibers by Ryuko. Nui notices that her blood from the eye socket is leaving a trail... and that gives Ryuko Nui's position.

Steps are above her. This must be Ryuko. Nui carefully rolls a clone on the ground. It grows on the end of the room. The clone sneaks through the halls and then starts doing sounds, however, all Nui can hear is an "I know this is just a clone!"

"I know everything! I know where you are! So this is how it feels like haunting someone's mind?!"

"I haven't been in your mind! I would never do that, and you know that!"

"Be careful of your surroundings!" Ryuko yells. Suddenly, the scissor blade appears above Nui, Ryuko slams through the ground and lands onto Nui. Nui kicks Ryuko away and stands up. Isshin's second daughter performs an over head attack, but she misses Nui. Nui pulls Life Fibers out of her fingers and moves a working bench to her to gain some time and a short cover. Ryuko, in her anger, destroys the working bench and attacks Nui. Nui parries the attack, hits Ryuko's torso and slams her through the wall and into the mansion's Atrium, where a little well stands.

"You ain't gonna get out of here alive! Do you think you can defeat ME!?"

"Stop this nonsense, Ryuko! I'm not your enemy! Leave my mind!"

"Did you left mine when I asked for it!?"

"I NEVER WAS IN YOUR MIND!"

"LIAR!" Ryuko screams and attacks Nui. Nui can dodge, but Ryuko hits her right hair and cuts off one of her twin drills. Nui observes her destroyed hair shocked.

"My... my hair... what did you do!?" Nui asks insulted. Ryuko believes if she can't hit Nui properly, then she has to provoke her so that she does mistakes. Right now, Nui is still stable, but the longer Ryuko attacks her and the more Ryuko deform her, the crazier Nui becomes - after all, she is narcissistic, and her narcissism can be used as weakness.

"Looking good today, Nui, but I'm just getting started!" Ryuko yells. Nui attacks Ryuko and hits her when Ryuko tries to ram her onto the ground. Ryuko is slammed into the well, then, two clones are dropped and run onto Ryuko, keeping her on the ground by holding the young woman's arms. Rain falls onto them. The clones are having a hard time keeping Ryuko incapacitated. Nui tries to grab Ryuko's scissor blade, but as she is about to grab it, Ryuko laughs dirty.

"Forgot a little thing, Nui."

"Huh?"

"Gonna make things pretty explosive here now!" Ryuko laughs. Brief moments later, the bomb Nui planted in the mansion explodes, fire spreads and shreds away Ryuko and Nui as well as her clones, although the clones die. There is no true Life Fiber regeneration just like in the real world in this memory - wounds that Ryuko and Nui cause to each other stay until the end of the memory. Lethal attacks can be regenerated to uphold the memory and it's protagonists, but only as long as these are not caused by the scissor blades. The wounds would regenerate just enough to provide a functional body.

(AN: For this part, if you feel like it, listen to "Saint Isshin's Theme Phase 1" from Sekiro on YouTube.)

As Ryuko stands up, the environment around her is burning in light, hellish colours. This must be the living room. Nui's bomb must have consisted of Napalm, the fire is unbearably hot, and the vision bad. Ryuko's leg caught fire, hence the wounds, and a few shards are in her body, but Ryuko removes them quickly enough. A few meters in

front of her, Nui stands up, who's dress is burning. She is able to vanish the fire, but she looks horrible, and her hair has gotten slightly burned too. Sparks fly around. Rain falls into the room. A thunder rings out.

"You really want to kill me after everything I did for you?" Nui asks in disbelief. Ryuko swings her blade into an aggressive stance.

"We both knew it would end like this one day... one way or another."

"I won't kill my sister no matter how much she hates me..."

"Then stop resisting and we'll get this over with quickly!"

"If you want to kill me, try it, but I won't let you do it!" Nui answers and attacks Ryuko. Ryuko blocks her attack. Both fight each other through the burning living room. A wooden pillar breaks apart, roof debris fall into the room. The debris hinder Ryuko from attacking Nui as they are in front of her. Both look at each other, but it is Ryuko who's full of hatred, while Nui is simply worried about what happens next. She loves Ryuko. She doesn't want to harm her. But she will resist and defend her life.

"If I would have known he's my father too I would have never done it, I swear, Ryuko!"

"But you didn't knew it and took him away from me and Satsuki!"

"And I am truly sorry about that! I never wanted that to happen! Please believe me when I say this is the only time I really feel bad for something! Please..."

"You know what? I believe you, but then again, I don't give a shit anymore! Even if you'd be sorry you changed this world to the worse, and for what?!"

Ryuko slams the debris away, Nui dodges, throws a clone and climbs via the clone up onto the second floor. The clone tries to

attack Ryuko, yet Ryuko is able to jump onto the clones face and up to the hall Nui just climbed into. She catches her with Life Fiber Threads and drags her little sister to her. Nui tries to cut off the band.

"Because humans hurt you!? Because "mama" would love you then?! I had a fucked up childhood too but that doesn't make me a damn psychopath unlike you, you stupid whore!"

Nui rips apart the thread and takes a few steps back.

"How do you know...?"

"I've been there! I've seen your memories, all of them! Hoomaru. Ragyo. Satsuki!" Ryuko counts. Nui notices stairs behind her, walks them up carefully as the ground on the left and right of her is burning away while she's watching Ryuko. There is a way up to the rooftop of the mansion which Nui tries to go for.

"You know, ever since you killed yourself I never once thought of you anymore! You were gone and it was good like that! But you made me lose my girlfriend, my best fucking friend I ever had and because of you, Satsuki and me suffer from this stupid Life Fiber sickness! If it wouldn't have been for you and your COVERS, I would have..."

"I didn't knew anything about this Life Fiber Sickness, I swear! This must have been Lady Ragyo! I'm sure she never said anything! I don't know why humans have it, but I promise it's not my fault!

"Yes it is and you will pay for it!" Ryuko screams and attacks once more with the scissor blade. Nui parries the attack and is able to briefly move the blade into a direction where Nui is able to stun Ryuko. Ryuko tries to adjust her position, but as Nui tries to catch the scissor blade, she kicks her little sister into a flame. Nui catches fire, her dress and hair burns, her legs catch fire wounds, and as Nui is about to lighten out the fire on her body, she is hit by Ryuko. Her torso is cut open, blood leaves her belly area and the dress fills up with blood and changes it's pink colour into red. Nui moans in pain.

"What?! Does that hurt!? Wanna know how it feels like hurting people and not being able to regenerate!? Well this is what you are doing the entire time!" Ryuko yells. Nui doesn't answer but throws additional clones at her big sister. The clones draw needle blades but don't attack, instead, they perform a wall that makes it harder for Ryuko to approach their mistress. Ryuko destroys the clones with quick slashes. Nui climbs onto the rooftop of the mansion. Above them, the sky is crying, and it became chaotic. Smoke leaves the many holes inside the roof. In Ryuko's head, Life Fibers sing quiet, incomprehensible sounds that seem to nurture her hate even more. Carefully, Ryuko walks over the bricks until she stands on a rather flat ground with Nui. The forest around the mansion is visible now.

A lightning slams into the ground on their right and destroys a tree. Wood shards and leaves fly through the area and between Ryuko and Nui, just like fire sparks, and the rain.

"If you really wanted to kill me, why didn't you do it when you had the chance?"

"Because Satsuki protected you... but now she's gone... and thinking of you makes me so incredibly angry! Do you think just because you do one good deed everything is forgotten?!"

"Good deed? I don't care for humanity and never will! I never cared for this Life Fiber Sickness and never will! Humans deserve it! But YOU and Satsuki don't deserve it! You are my sisters, I love both of you, I don't want anything and anyone to harm you!"

"But something did harm us!"

"And I want to make up for it, no matter how, but you need to give me the chance for that! I protected your friend Mako, she is doing fine, please believe me!"

"Fine!? You probably killed her too!" Ryuko screams and attacks Nui anew. Nui avoids Ryuko's following attacks and slashes back with the scissor blade. Both block their attacks, both are wounded, but

none of them thinks of taking a step back anymore. Too much is on stakes now. Every attack Ryuko performs is filled with hatred and violence. Her fighting style has turned into a much more chaotic one, that makes it hard for her little sister to avoid her attacks, and often enough, Ryuko is able to deal small cut wounds on Nui's body, especially on the arms and shoulders.

Then, however, Ryuko falls onto the ground due to her erratic fighting style, and by that, Nui deals a deep vertical cut wound onto Ryuko's upper body. Ryuko screams in pain, slams Nui's scissor blade away and jumps onto her to choke Nui. Ryuko and Nui both land onto a damaged part of the roof. The bricks are destroyed, and only plywood holds it together. Ryuko looks into Nui's eye - a devils mask is visible. The devils mask laughs into Ryuko's face dirty, and she hates this gaze. Due to that, Ryuko lets one hand off of Nui's neck and starts burying her thumb into Nui's face and her open eye socket. Blood flows out of Nui's wound. Nui screams, rolls out another clone who is able to protect her mistress, but as Nui tries to stand up while the clone keeps Ryuko busy, Ryuko turns to the clone and rams her arm into the clone's body, ripping out it's heart and dissolving it into Life Fibers. This is part of Ryuko's power as parasite inside a memory - the Life Fiber Sickness is able to do whatever it wants to. Nui walks back shocked.

"I can kill you in a single strike if I'd wanted to but rather do I let you struggle just like years ago on that carrier, remember, sweetheart?!" Ryuko yells and attacks once more with the scissor blades, Nui however parries and moves their blades into the ground, causing the ground beneath them to break apart. Both fall with the debris through the burning building and into another room. The sisters cough blood due to the debris hitting them. Ryuko's legs are badly wounded, Nui's torso cut open, a bad wound is visible, and her hair has caught fire, just like the cute tie on her head.

Nui stands up, angered by the fact her entire appearance is ruined now thanks to her sister. It seems like they are in Ryuko's room. Images of her, her school books, personal items, even a guitar.

Everything is in flames. She looks horrible with her wounds. A normal human would be dead already. But she ain't a human, just like Ryuko. Both are Life Fibers - monsters in their own ways.

"You still defend yourself even though you know you already lost!"

"If I lose, you will lose too, Ryuko! It's my Doppelgänger! He wants you to kill me! If you kill me, you will kill yourself, damn it!"

"The fuck you talking about!?"

"Think about it! If you kill me, you'll die too because you are in my head!"

"You only want to save your damn life! Are you scared of going back into the dark halls?!" Ryuko yells. Nui does not answer.

"What are you looking at, huh?! Once someone provokes you, you act all insulted, right? Must feel like shit being treated like nothing!"

"... I won't go back to this place..."

"Oh yes, you will!"

"I won't!" Nui screams and attacks Ryuko. Nui misses Ryuko due to her missing left eye and the already bad vision in the building. Ryuko takes this mercilessly as an advantage to cut open Nui's back. Blood spreads, Nui moans in pain and falls onto her knees. Her big sister kicks her into her face, and as Nui attempts to throw a clone, Ryuko grabs her arm.

"Your clones can't save your ass every time!" Ryuko reacts and tries to cut off Nui's arm with the scissor blade. Nui drops her scissor blade and forms her free arm into a needle, piercing into Ryuko's torso. This gives Nui time to rescue herself. Ryuko is briefly stunned, but Nui's advantage doesn't hold up long. Swiftly, Ryuko kicks the scissor blade away and grabs Nui's face, slamming it against the burning wooden wall. This destroys Nui's face even further, although

she is still recognizable. When Ryuko drops her onto the ground, she tries to achieve the second scissor blade, but Nui draws Life Fibers out of her fingers to catch Ryuko. Ryuko falls near the scissor blade. Quickly, Nui tries to get her scissor blade back, but as she does, Ryuko rams her own scissor blade into Nui's torso. Nui however grabs the blade and moves it through her body and out of it, and with that, Nui is armed with Ryuko's blade now. Ryuko manages to gain enough time to steal Nui's blade.

"You stupid... grrr..." her little sister grumbles. The big sister performs a powerful attack that slams Nui out of the building, even though she blocked it. The fire is getting stronger and burns away Ryuko's clothes even further, she barely wears anything anymore, though Ryuko doesn't care anymore. She just wants to get rid of this psychopath. Her own wounds regenerate only very slowly and reveal the Life Fiber organs in her body. The upper body is destroyed. Nui takes a few steps back outside on the path to the mansion and watches Ryuko approach her.

"You won't be able to defeat me, Ryuko! Not here! Not now!"

"Then what are you waiting for, hm? I know you are scared!"

"I am! But I would never come up with the idea of killing my big sister no matter how much she hates me!"

Ryuko, annoyed by these words, charges forward, Nui slowly. Both slam their scissor blades against each other and start pressing, during that, Ryuko and Nui watch both into each others faces. Nui smiles slightly evil, Ryuko bites her teeth together.

None of them weaken, both uphold the pressure equally.

Ryuko eventually tries to move their blades down to hit her head against Nui.

However, Nui expected that and wins the interaction by giving her a hit with her head herself. Ryuko stuns and falls onto her back, and

lastly, Nui attacks Ryuko again and is able to blow the scissor blade from her hand, even though, due to the angle she attacks, she cuts open Ryuko's left face. She almost hit her eye. Ryuko screams in pain, unarmed, while Nui is able to achieve the second scissor blade. Her big sister tries to stand up, but before she can do that, Nui is able to threaten her with both weapons.

Although... threatening is not the right word. It's enough for Nui. Ryuko is defeated. Seeing her sister like that just breaks her Life Fiber heart. She barely has any clothes left, on her body, a few Life Fiber threads hang out of her wounds, and she can't stop bleeding. Nui is pretty much defeated too - her face is disfigured, her dress destroyed, her hair burned away, wounds everywhere.

"... I don't want to fight you, Ryuko... please... just let it go." Nui pleads while holding the scissor blades. Ryuko catches breath.

"Fuck you! You... you..."

"This was a long time ago, Ryuko. I know you hate me. But... if you kill me now... it'll never stop. I mean the hate. It... took me Hoomaru to realize that. I hated humans and I still do, I wanted to kill all of them and sometimes I still have that urge... but that would have meant killing her too... and now she is gone. We can only lose this. Revenge... is fucked up."

Ryuko thinks. Seeing her little sister like that... and seeing her own wounds like that. Behind Nui, a lightning lands onto the ground, and her body briefly shines up - in this brief moment, Ryuko sees the mad Nui with the black Fiber arms, with the obsessed smile... the one from her nightmares. The Life Fibers in Ryuko's mind sing louder.

"Kill her." is what they sing. Nui slowly builds the scissor blades together and holds them in one hand, then, she holds her hand towards Ryuko to grab her up.

"If you want me to disappear... then that's okay. I'll never come back. I'll find a place to live... maybe a small island... or a cottage in a forest... you'll never have to think of me again. I promise." Nui offers. All her words are genuine. She can't make up the death of their father. She can't make up for the countless nightmares humans suffered through. But she received her punishment a long time ago. Five years she was imprisoned in a place one can only describe as hell. A cold, subtle, lonely hell. Maybe she is right. Maybe revenge is not necessary at this point anymore. Maybe it's enough to exile her. Ryuko grabs Nui's hand.

Kill her.

"... you... I..."

"It's okay."

Ryuko stands up. The little sister musters her big sister from head to toe. Ryuko looks horrible. Wounds everywhere. But Nui knows all of this is just in her head. Once Ryuko is out of her head, everything will be okay again.

Kill her.

"I'm sorry about these wounds, Ryuko. I... don't want to harm you."

"I know..." Ryuko answers and takes a deep breath. She nearly falls down but Nui holds her up. In Nui's face, Ryuko can see genuine empathy. Inside her head... Nui must be the same person like when she was a child. Did it ever changed? Truth is: Nui always was a child, imprisoned in the body of an adult. There was no way she could become an adult. She always was stuck in her stolen childhood. So even though Ryuko stands in front of a near adult - it's just a little child in her head, with empathy, with kindness. All of that is still there, inside her. But it's buried so deep nearly nothing can bring it back anymore.

"Are you alright, Ryuko?"

KILL HER!

Suddenly, Ryuko attacks Nui and attempts to grab her scissor blades. Nui loses the blades out of her hand, she punches Ryuko's face, breaks her nose, Ryuko keeps her face away from her, kicks her into the knee, then into her face, Nui falls onto the ground! Her dress is soaked with mud, Ryuko grabs the first scissor blade, Nui tries to keep her away from the second one, but Ryuko is able to cut open Nui's legs entirely, making it unable for her sister to move forward. Nui grabs Ryuko's leg on the ground, yet Ryuko kicks her into the face, smashing her nose entirely. Ryuko rams the scissor blade into Nui's upper body as she stands up again, runs towards the second scissor blade, and just as Nui is about to remove the first scissor blade out of her body, Ryuko catches that one too by removing it herself.

KILL HER!

Ryuko stands in front of Nui, armed with both scissor blades. Rain soaks up her hair. Ryuko looks like a monster. Nui just lies on the ground, looking up to Ryuko. No one says anything. But Nui's gaze says simply one word: anxiety.

"You... remember the time when you told me right into my face... you killed dad?" Ryuko asks. Nui doesn't answer.

"I remember it pretty well. How you laughed about it. How you turned me into a monster." she explains with an ice cold gaze.

"..."

"Let's put the piece of clothing you are onto the test... see if you can survive this, you bitch." Ryuko ends and builds the scissor blades together. A thunder rings out. Ryuko grabs Nui with Life Fibers, then slams her into the air with the first scissor blade. Nui is launched several dozens of meters into the air, and eventually, thanks to her Life Fiber powers, Ryuko jumps up, catches Nui, and a lightning lands next to them. In that moment, Ryuko cuts thousands of times

through the air from every direction directly onto Nui, horizontally, vertically, diagonally.

KILL HER! KILL HER ! KILL HER!

There is no screaming but the Life Fibers in Ryuko's head singing. That, and the sound of a scissor cutting through... flesh. Not clothing. Flesh. Life Fibers fly through the air, blood flows as if thousands of buckets are emptied, and finally, Ryuko lands back onto the ground.

SEN-I-SOSHITSU

Nui lands on the ground again, rolling several meters through the area, leaving a trail of dead Life Fibers and blood, until she slams against a tree. Ryuko's clothes are gone. Naked, she steps to the tree to seek up Nui. Nui herself is naked as well due to the Sen-I-Soshitsu.

She is unrecognizable now.

A few hair strings are left. Life Fibers barely hold her left hand together, since her entire left arm... is gone. It was cut away. Only a single, weak Life Fiber holds her hand onto her body. On the belly, thousands of horrible wounds reveal her organs, on the other side of the body, revealing the tree, that's how deep they are partially. The left foot is gone. Life Fibers hang on the dull leg and fidget around in the hope to find a connection. The right leg consists out of a few hundred thin Life Fiber threads. Her face is nearly destroyed - it's the only thing that still works, but... only barely. Every other part of her face reveals Life Fibers in frightening amounts. Nui's upper body... or better, it's skin, is gone - the organs are visible. Her heart is barely pumping. She cannot move anymore.

She just lies under the tree, under the leaves, the rain does not protect her anymore. Blood flows out of all her wounds, out of all parts of the body. And when Ryuko finally reaches her dying sister,

it's nearly over. She is not dead yet. Not yet. Ryuko wants to finish it herself.

Ryuko disconnects the scissor blades and holds them up. It's almost done. She just has to slam the blades one last time into her. Nui can't move anymore, after all.

Nui looks into Ryuko's face. If Ryuko wants to kill her little sister, she should look right into her face while doing so. Nui doesn't do a face expression anymore... it's nearly impossible for her. There is no kind smile anymore. And neither a sad face. Nothing works anymore.

In Ryuko, only these words hover through her brain: Kill her. Kill Her. Kill her. Life Fibers sing, praising Ryuko for her glorious deed. She did what they wanted. She punished the one who is guilty for destroying their own species, dooming it into a slow death. Kill her. Kill her. Kill her. She doesn't hear much more.

Only the words of the Life Fibers are left. Ryuko bites her teeth together. She has to look into her face. She can't look away. The rain is getting worse. The fire is getting louder. The voices are the loudest, still.

Kill her.

A single tear leaves Nui's barely intact eye. Ryuko looks into it.

The rain, the fire, the thunder, they try to deafen the Life Fiber's voices. Something is fighting inside Ryuko.

As if... her heart would say something else.

Is that really what Ryuko wants to do?

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(AN: Listen to Kill La Kill's track "MT Hensou Gata" on YouTube. The part around 2:10 fits here.)

Ryuko drops the scissor blades. The voices mute away in an instant.

Ryuko looks up to the sky. Tears leave her eyes. The Life Fibers in the sky break apart.

"... what am I doing...?"

...

The rain falls onto Ryuko's wounded body. She can feel the cold wind on her skin. She can feel the water flowing down on her arms, her shoulders, her skin. This isn't just rain. It's tears. Those tears Nui always had to hold back. Ryuko can feel them. All of them give her the feeling of being lonely. Being left alone forever in this world.

Ryuko knows that feeling all too well. Everything is coming back. The time before Honnouji. Being alone. Always being afraid of something happening to yourself, and no one is able to protect you. This feeling, this loneliness changes someone, it destroys the trust towards other people, your friendliness, it makes you... sad.

No one has to be alone.

Not even a psychopath, like her little sister. Ryuko looks to her dying sister. She closed her eye. The tear Nui dropped flows down her face. Tearing up, Ryuko swiftly approaches her sister and knees down to her.

"Nui... Nui... !" she mumbles worried and holds her face onto the broken face. She tries to keep Nui awake, but she doesn't open her eye anymore. This can't happen! Not now! She cannot sleep now!

"Nui, please..." she mumbles and tries to heal her wounds with her parasitarian powers, but due to her lack of experience in tailoring and sewing, this is impossible. She can't even manage to sew Nui's face together again. It's in this darkest hour in which Ryuko believes she won, that there is more in Nui than just Life Fibers, and psychopathy.

There always was a feeling, living Being in her. And Ryuko destroyed it. Just like everyone else.

Nothing happens anymore. Nui doesn't move anymore. The Life Fibers inside her body lost their power, they don't shine anymore, and they feel weak. And the heart... apparently stopped pumping.

Ryuko lost this battle.

"I... killed her."

Ryuko lies her head onto Nui's shoulder. She can't stop crying anymore.

"... please don't do this to me now... please don't go now..."

...

"... Nui, please..."

...

"... if anything, I should lie there... not you..."

"..."

"... I... I'm sorry..."

The rain continues to fall. Only three, or maybe four Threads of Fate, and Memory Fibers, hover behind the dark clouds. Another thunder rings out. It's so cold out here. So lonely.

But this is what Ryuko wanted. She always wanted revenge. And now she received it.

But was it worth it?

Ryuko gives up. She killed her little sister. Nothing will happen anymore. There is no Memory Fiber that saves her from this memory, from the nightmare she just created for herself. There is no Hinata. No one.

Ryuko can only sit down to her dead sister near the tree. The young woman watches the burning Matoi mansion. She still cries. Quiet, but she can't hold it back anymore. There isn't anything left to do anyway. Loneliness overthrows Ryuko again. Coldness. Sadness.

Remorse.

Moments before, Nui was there, and she offered her a hand... and Ryuko used that to her advantage.

Something died in Ryuko. Maybe it's catharsis that caused it. Maybe that's why the hate inside her... vanished all of a sudden.

Killing Nui killed a part of herself. Ryuko knows Nui's mind will break apart soon. The pain will be immeasurable - both for Ryuko, and for the real Nui, who most likely experienced all of this.

It's painful knowing your big sibling would actively try to kill you - and actually do that. Nui couldn't even experience how Ryuko gave up on her hate. The last thing she saw is her hate. She will believe Ryuko still hates her. Despite all the things she did for her big sister - it was not enough.

Again.

It was never enough. For no one.

As monstrous and psychopathic Nui was, and as evil she could have been... Nui was family. Ryuko misses her. Realizing the path you walked upon was always the wrong one is a feeling that cannot be described truly. It destroys Ryuko's heart.

But she wanted this. And this is what she gets.

She can only watch the mansion burning down now. The rain continues to fall from the sky, in front of Ryuko's feet, the tree protects her from it. Inside her head, the sounds of the fire forge into her.

"... I'm sorry..."

...

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...

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...

The mansion still burns. One hour has passed. It doesn't stop raining. It doesn't stop burning. There is no family anymore. No friends.

She took that wish from herself.

...

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Ryuko still cries. Lonely.

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... something moves onto her left leg. Ryuko slowly moves her head to her leg. Nui's severed hand is onto it. When she looks up to her sister... she notices Nui looks at her slightly. Tears leave Ryuko's eyes. Nui wants to say something, she can see how Nui tries to open her mouth, but it doesn't work anymore. Her neck is ripped open, and the vocal cords seem to not work properly anymore.

It makes Ryuko cry even more now. She isn't dead. But she isn't exactly alive either anymore. Ryuko can only cry seeing her sister like that. She couldn't show mercy when the time to show it was offered. She was willing to kill her.

Still. Nui is alive. Somehow. Ryuko looks back to the mansion with Nui.

...

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...

Gentle steps can be heard on Ryuko's right. She doesn't look to the right. There is a white light however coming closer from her eye angle. It's Hinata. Ryuko doesn't look up to him, or to his "legs", she continues to watch the mansion.

"You humans... truly are fascinating. You... take away each other's lives... for the most simple things. But only when it is too late... you realize your mistakes. I see remorse in you, if this is the correct word for it. You forgive a Being that may not deserve absolution... and yet... you allow it to it... and that is... remarkable, young Matoi."

"..."

"Your ability of showing emotions... is your biggest weakness... and yet, your biggest strength... through it, you destroy... and you create. Truly... remarkable. Truly... divine."

"..."

"When you leave this mind, you will go back into the dark halls... and from there on... you shall be able to enter your body anew..."

"... and then...?"

"Then... you will continue as you wish... but you will help us. For the moment, however... Matoi... help yourself... and those close to you, and those who shall be close to you... your young... sister... she might need something you humans call a "hug"..."

This attempt from Hinata... it's as if he would try to understand how empathy works. Ryuko doesn't answer. Hinata dissolves into Life Fibers, and a Memory Fiber appears.

Still: Ryuko stays with her sister at the tree. She doesn't want to let her alone. The rain and the fire keep continuing. Maybe eternally?

Nui leans her head onto Ryuko's shoulder. Blood flows down Ryuko's arm. Several hours pass. The night starts. It's still thundering, and raining. Ryuko turns her head to her little sister.

"... I have to go now, Nui."

Nui nods very slowly.

"Please... don't hurt yourself. I'm coming. And... when I am back... you will receive the biggest hug the world has ever seen... okay?"

Nui looks to Ryuko up.

"I'm coming. But... first I gotta kick the ass of this Doppelgänger."

Nui tries to speak. Her voice is broken.

"... o-kay..."

Ryuko takes a deep breath and looks back to the mansion one last time. Then, she approaches the Memory Fiber. She looks back to Nui one last time. She's tearing up.

"... I... really... love you... Ryuko..."

...

"I love you too, little sister."

...

..

AN: This was hard to read, right? Eventually, Ryuko is able to get a second chance. Let's hope Nui doesn't do anything bad now. And let's hope Masaru's plan works and Nudist Beach comes to the rescue. The next chapter will be full of action and a two-parter again. You guys can look forward to Chapter 25: "Sharing Tears Together In The Darkness". See you next time... and leave a review if you like. :)

Sharing Tears Together In The Darkness 1

AN: Welcome back to the newest chapter! This is part 1 of Chapter 25, part 2 will follow VERY SHORTLY (!) I assume I will be done with it tomorrow or on Monday, just keep an eye out for notifications via mail or however you notice it when a new chapter comes out! :D Have fun reading, Ichiro's getting his ass kicked today. ;)

Ryuko appears back in the dark halls for the last time. She still is in Nui's broken mind - these are simply her halls.

Everything is broken. Memory Fibers that form little shards, loose Life Fibers, rain, darkness. Is it possible Nui believes Ryuko actually did kill her and the Nui Ryuko killed in her memory was just an illusion, or the work of Hinata? In any case, Ryuko needs to escape Neo-REVOCS as soon as possible, now. A white memory Fiber is still visible at the end of the hall - it shines orange and consists of a few Threads of Fate as well as normal Life Fibers. It seems to be the exit from Nui's mind and the dark halls of the Life Fibers in general. The young woman has her body back and wears a black jacket, and she also has the scissor blades with her. Arriving at the exit, the insane Nui with the black arms appears again.

She seems to be angered and yet desperate.

"What are you doing!?" the nightmare Nui asks. Ryuko looks calm to her.

"You can't go now! Ryuko, you wanted to kill me! KI-HI-LL ME! COME ON! You need to do this! If you don't do it now, you'll never be able to! Please... please please please just do it!"

"..."

"How often do I have to haunt you so that you can finally kill me!"

"..."

"... just say something, please. Please just do it for me."

Ryuko shakes her head.

"I'm done fighting, Nui." Ryuko answers. Nui reacts surprised.

"You know... all these years I just wanted to get rid of you. There wasn't a single day in which I wished you could finally go to hell, where I believed you to belong to. You have any clue how much I despised you?" Ryuko asks. Nui shakes her head.

"But do you want to know something funny?"

"Mhm?"

"I don't hate you."

"But why?"

Ryuko hesitates for a moment.

"When I saw you dying on the ground... and I saw you cry..."

"..."

"... I realized I was killing my own little sister.... you see, I wished to have a family back then. When I was in your body, at first I despised it... but the more I was around you and felt what you felt, the more I felt like... back then. Alone and hopeless. The difference is, you never got a friend like Mako who would have saved you.

I... I'm sorry."

Nui doesn't answer.

"... you are the biggest asshole I've ever seen... but... b-but I can't kill you. I can't do it. For nothing in the world would I do it... just like with Satsuki. Mom... fucked you up. Humans... fucked you up. And... I... fucked you up.

And I want to give you that second chance. Just like I gave it to mom.

... I'm sorry."

The insane Nui doesn't know how to answer. Ryuko tries to approach Nui to hug her but Nui pushes her away.

"Don't hug me, Ryuko. I'm just... an illusion in your head. Hug the real me."

"..."

"... I c-c-could use a hug now." she stutters, starts crying and dissolves. Ryuko nods.

"Don't do anything stupid now." Ryuko mumbles and enters the white Life Fiber. Her body dissolves entirely and she finally leaves the dark halls...

...

In the meantime, Satsuki and the Elite-Four arrived on the landing platforms of the Nudist Beach base. It's early evening, the sun is almost gone, and the five friends approach the large Zeppelin which is finally finished. It's impressive and just as imposing as the "Naked Sol". On the sides and below the zeppelin are turrets. In the center of the Zeppelin on the left and right side are gates that reveal the inner part of it - it appears that the Zeppelin has space to carry helicopters, which makes it an aircraft carrier in the most literal way possible. Blue stripes decorate the walls of the Zeppelin, and on top of it is the heart of the large final weapon of Nudist Beach, the bridge. There seems to be some sort of large blade attached on the Zeppelin as well, likely to destroy large Life Fiber objects. The entire design reminds of the "Naked Sol" - now in the air however.

Satsuki wears her new wrath regalia. The civil variant reminds of her student council president uniform. Light blue colors, golden stripes,

blue shoulders, and dark blue gloves - stripping off the stripes on the arms activates the regalia. A cape hangs on her shoulder.

She does appear like a powerful warrior, an empress - in her hands, she holds the developed form of her with Junketsu empowered blade, now as a large spear with blades on both sides, similar to a Naginata once used by Samurai. Her appearance is grim.

"So I guess we'll just storm in, kick some ass and find your sis?" Sanageyama asks.

"With Mr. Yamamoto's help, our chances of success aren't even on a level equal to suicide." Houka mentions sarcastic. Gamagoori and Nonon don't say a thing. When the group arrives on the bridge, they look around. Mikisugi stands there on the platform at the very front of the Zeppelin bridge, looking outside the large window wall. The large carrier flies up slowly. With a slight smile, Mikisugi turns around. Tsumugu smokes a cigarette in the background.

"I've been waiting for this! If everything is working as intended, we'll beat up Neo-REVOCS so hard they'll regret they ever put clothes on!"

...

Ryuko falls through a dark room - around her, Life Fibers fly up, all sorts of temperatures can be felt, emotions from happiness to hatred, anxiety to surprise. Pictures of the real world, dreams, and finally, Ryuko's Life Fiber form is torn away from her body and Ryuko hovers. Below her, she can see her Life Fiber form - it's lacking of arms and legs.

A light appears next to her and sinks down. It's Hinata. He does not say a thing, instead, he raises his arm. Life Fibers crawl from the darkness and start sewing on Ryuko's disabled body. Ryuko can feel how, even though the Life Fiber form is not her current "myself", the Life Fibers work on her. Slowly, arms and legs are sewn onto her - black, shining in several colors, mainly red. Melodies can be heard.

The Life Fibers that follow Hinata seem to be on her side and spread hope in her, yet their melodies have a dark undertone, still.

Ryuko falls up and lands on the ground. Hinata hovers to her into the dark sky. Looking down, Ryuko can see an image of thousands, no, hundreds of thousands of Memory Fibers. So many memories. So many feelings. So many personalities.

"Now... Matoi... you shall leave this place, and become a part of your body again. Good luck, young Matoi."

Hinata liquifies Ryuko and tears her into thousands of Life Fibers, and suddenly, she jumps shocked out of her bed and rings for air.

"Ryuko!?" Senketsu reacts shocked. When Ryuko looks up, she realizes she is in the Grand Couturier's quarters. Pink colors everywhere, furniture made out of elegant wood - soft and warm.

"Senketsu?!" she asks and looks around, seeing her friend on the wall. Next to him is a mirror, and as she approaches him, she can see her... arms, and legs.

"Your... you..."

Ryuko looks at her new limbs. They look off. They shouldn't be on her. It doesn't look right - the black limbs appear like parasites, unwelcome visitors, even though Ryuko knows perfectly well nothing is wrong with them. It's strange having them. It's truly as if someone just sew something on you. It works, but it feels... alienated.

Still, Ryuko takes a deep breath and looks at Senketsu who seems to be worried.

"No time to mourn about what I am now, we gotta kick this Director's ass."

"How did you even..."

"Long story, Senketsu, I'll explain later!" Ryuko answers and touches Senketsu, yet suddenly, her arm forms into a needle which almost would have hit Senketsu's eye.

"Woah!" she reacts. Being able to form her body and her new limbs is something she needs to learn first - with concentration she can form her arm back into a normal one however. Her legs feel like they are capable of more as well. How they would work added with Senketsu's Kamui powers? Her black limbs feel cold and like cloth. Carefully, she puts on Senketsu again.

"There is blood in your arms and legs, but it feels strange."

"I guess you gotta live with that for a while... alright, now... what next?" Ryuko asks and looks around.

"Got an idea where we are and where my scissor blades hide?"

"Masaru brought you here and helped you. I've spoke with him a few minutes ago. Nudist Beach is on the way. Right now, we are in the Grand Couturiers quarters - be quiet, the Director is in the next room."

"He'll have the scissor blades most likely."

"Yes. Ryuko, we don't have much time to talk or forge a plan. Masaru is somewhere in the facility and prepares some sort of all-out-war here, he said he's working on destroying everything with tons of explosives and Ashigaru, but before that, he wants to get you out of here. We should try to meet up with him at the power core and support him, and we better be fast."

"Aight, I gotcha. Works perfectly well with the idea of destroying everything here - I'll tell you, Senketsu, you won't believe what I saw when I was... unconscious, I suppose."

"I believe you. But now we have to concentrate. Are you doing alright?"

"Yeah, I'm good. Time to kick ass."

...

Masaru prepared the Ashigaru in the server room of the Neo-REVOCS headquarter. They will turn hostile in a few minutes and start attacking the Samurai and Couturiers. The robotic units are located everywhere in the building - and right now, he and his Ashigaru plant bombs in the large power core hall. Looking on a small Laptop, he can see the location of the Nudist Beach Zeppelin.

"Got thirty minutes. Should be enough time to get Matoi out of here with me." he mumbles and looks around.

This whole facility will go to hell soon, and it somewhat relieves him, even though his face expression says otherwise. Destroying Neo-REVOCS will certainly impact Tokio - but this is probably still better than leaving the Life Fibers under Ichiro's command a place to reside and plan their next moves. As Masaru looks up, he can see the large window roofs of the Neo-REVOCS complex. They're more than hundred meters above him, meaning that the power core is in the underground part of the facility.

...

Ryuko takes one last look around in the Grand Couturier's quarters. Senketsu still fits perfectly well, but before leaving the room, she opens a little shelf with various items. Since the Grand Couturier's quarter and everything else in Neo-REVOCS is an imitation of the original REVOCS, just with different colors, everything should stay the same, and the theory Ryuko has is true on that. When she opens the shelf, there is a yellow cute tie which she picks up. Ryuko smiles.

"What's that for?" Senketsu asks.

"For my lil sis." Ryuko answers and puts the tie into one of Senketsu's pockets where she can feel... a vial. Ryuko takes a little peek.

It's the cure for the Life Fiber Sickness.

With an evil smile, Ryuko rubs her black hands and prepares herself.

"Ready to go crazy like years ago?"

"Aren't we doing that the entire time already?"

"I mean like... really go crazy?"

"... heh, why not?"

Ichiro in the meantime is reading a book about philosophy - what is the human and what defines him. Interested and with glasses on his face, he reads the book with an enjoyed face expression.

"Hierarchies in medieval ages... how stupid." he mumbles. Interested, he turns the page and opens a new chapter.

"Yo, whatcha reading bro?" Ryuko asks all of a sudden. Ichiro looks up and sees her. Her hands are in her pockets, but as she comes closer, she'll reveals them and shrugs amused.

"... how is that possible...?" he asks and drops the book. Ryuko sits down onto his desk and looks down to him.

"Didn't expect that to happen, huh?"

Ichiro doesn't ask. Ryuko notices the scissor blades on the desk and grabs them relaxed.

"You seem speechless, what's up, you never saw Life Fibers regenerating?" she asks and showcases her black arms. The psychopath is genuinely shocked seeing them.

"You asshole took my arms and legs and quite frankly, I totally understand why you did that. Now, that I've been there in these dark halls, I kinda realized I did some major bullshit. I'm serious about that by the way."

"..."

"Seeing what happens if you are consumed by hate like my family really opened my eyes. Revenge is bullshit, I won't lie. I guess I did understand what I did. Like, all these Life Fibers having personalities somewhere... it's... scary. I can only thank you for that." Ryuko grins evil and plays with her black hands.

"Who... who gave you those?"

"Does that really matter? Look, what I'm trying to tell you is simple: I learned my lesson. If you wanted to show me what I could do better in my life, then honestly, thanks dude, really. Just understand one thing." Ryuko mentions and extends the scissor blades, then, she stands up and breaks the desk into two parts and slams it away.

"This ain't revenge or anything. I just wanna leave and go crazy for once." Ryuko smiles and attempts to leave the room, but just as she is about to reach the doors, she turns around, smiling evil.

"Oh yeah, I got a question."

"... that would be?"

"Do you Life Fibers teach yourself how to fly in the dark halls too or should I teach you that now?" Ryuko asks and slams the scissor blades into his direction.

"... fuck." he mumbles.

Ichiro is straight up send out of the presidential office of Neo-REVOCS via the window. Ryuko activates Senketsu Azami. There are shredded parts on the sleeves, and Ryuko's black arms seem to fuel the scissor blades with additional energy. Briefly after however, shots fall and the alarm rings out - is this really according to plan or is this the reaction to a certain man falling out of the building? Ryuko kicks open the doors and runs down the stairs to Hoomaru's old office. Two Couturiers notice Ryuko.

"Matoi!?"

"She escaped!"

Ryuko attacks the Couturiers with the scissor blades. Those liquify themselves to avoid the attack, then, they go back into their normal form and attack Ryuko with Life Fiber whips. Ryuko cuts away the whips. As the Couturiers try to go for an combined attack by forming new whips, Ryuko jumps above their attack and cuts away their legs, incapacitating but not killing them. The elevator door is eventually kicked open, and via the window walls of it, she can see how far up she is in the building at the moment. Jumping all the way down would be crazy.

So Ryuko just slams open the window walls.

"We're going to jump?"

"Of course!"

Ryuko jumps out of the elevator and falls down several meters before she is able to ram the scissor blades into a wall to slow down the fall. Red lights shine in the building, in the various floors, Ashigaru fight their once allied Couturiers and Samurai. The walls on which Ryuko slides down are breaking apart one after another, and carefully, Ryuko lands on the stairs of the reception. Steel gates appear in the door frames, Life Fibers crawl on them, and when Ryuko tries to cut them open, it seems as if the attempt might take a while. In and around the building, shots fall, blades and the melodies of Life Fibers are audible.

The path to the Auditorium is open however, and the Auditorium can lead back to the research facilities, and via that, there should be a way to enter the power core. Ryuko runs through the battlefield and gets access to the large room - there, she can find a group of Couturiers, seemingly preparing their next moves. They quickly notice Ryuko's presence. Ryuko slides down the railings next to the

stairs and kicks down one of the Couturiers. The others circle around her.

"How did she escape?"

"You clowns seriously think you can get me just like that?"

"Who granted you an exit out of the halls?!"

Ryuko slams the scissor blades onto the ground. They cause a shock wave that slams down the Couturiers. One of them stands up quickly enough to attack Ryuko with his dull Life Fiber hands - they grab Ryuko's face and try to sew it apart, yet Ryuko lets her weapons drop on purpose to form her arms into needles, with which she cuts away the Couturier's hands. The Couturier falls down, Ryuko grabs the scissor blades and holds them close to his head.

"You guys are kinda right when you say I fucked up big time on your end! But if you try to kill me or my friends I ain't gonna stop, that's a promise! So you better give up!" Ryuko threatens and kicks the Couturier unconscious, then, she runs through the halls and back into the maintenance room which she used on her first escape attempt. Instead of crawling through the shafts though, she just slams them open and finds herself back in the Fiber Factories. The capsules are open, Life Fibers crawl out of them, blood is on the ground, a few Ashigaru destroy everything here.

"This part of the building was completely different in the past, Senketsu! Less sick than it is today!"

"How do you know that?"

"I was in the memories of my family - even mom's and dad's!"

"What!?"

"Yeah like I said, long story! I think I know where we have to go though." Ryuko answers and reaches a large gate infused with Life

Fibers, visible on the red cracks on it. Ryuko tries to open it up but due to the Life Fibers inside it, the process is difficult, even with the scissor blades. Suddenly, needle shaped Life Fibers fly at Ryuko's position and hit her, blood leaves her body, she jumps down, the needles are about as large as a finger. Couturiers approach Ryuko's position, Ryuko blocks their attacks with the scissor blades. By raising their arms, the Couturiers can spawn needles made out of Life Fibers in the air - those needles are aimed at Ryuko. Senketsu has an idea.

"Ryuko?"

"Uh yeah sup!?"

"Their needles might damage the gate!" Senketsu mentions. Ryuko ducks down, avoids the needles, even though a few still hit her, but the majority hits the gate, as the Couturiers did not expect her to move so fast. When Ryuko finally liquifies into Life Fibers, her opponents have a serious issue damaging her. Ryuko moves to the Couturiers and forms back into a human, then attacks with the scissor blades. The blood on the ground seemed to impact her, as her black arms lighten up, powering up the scissor blades even more. Ryuko slams the scissor blades on the ground, red and purple shock waves hit the Couturiers and dissolve them partially, but ultimately knocking them unconscious. The normal shock waves couldn't do that, but with the new arms, this is well possible.

"What the hell..."

"Oh my." Senketsu mumbles.

Ryuko looks up to the gate and notices it's broken. She kicks the rest open. Large stairs lead down into the lower parts of the complex. Ryuko runs through the hall and walks down the stairs - red lights shine up here, and as Ryuko ran down the dozens of steps that lead down far deeper into the complex, she opens up another large gate that hasn't been infused with Life Fibers however. Seems like at this

point no one expected anyone to come this far. Or maybe this part of the building hasn't been reinforced. Several halls are revealed.

Is this the heart of Neo-REVOCS? One of the halls seem to lead to the power core. Smoke rises up, it seems to be burning here. There haven't been many fights here from the looks of it.

"Man, I wonder how long they worked on this building." Ryuko wonders.

"I'd rather wonder how much deeper we can go here."

"I guess if this goes on we'll find ourselves back in the lower city of Tokyo."

Behind a steel door, several blue shining walls are visible - electricity leaves them. The ground consists of solid glass, Ryuko can see herself mirrored in it. Thousands of cables are below her. The other rooms must have more too.

"God damn..."

"They certainly tried to make sure everything looks imposing."

"I mean, REVOCS always was rich, but shit. Maintenance must have a lot of fun here."

As Ryuko enters the next hall, she notices a large gate with a sign that leads to the power core, so the direction was right. The wall suddenly explodes and a black scythe appears, Ryuko jumps back. Out of the smoke, the Neo-REVOCS Director appears.

"Shit."

"You couldn't made these black arms by yourself, this must have been the High Entity, question is, who was it?!" Ichiro reacts annoyed and observes Ryuko's new limbs. The psychopath slowly approaches her.

"And this Kamui on your shoulder... you may have no use for me anymore, but when I am done with your disgusting abomination of a Life Fiber Being, I'll send you into the absolute emptiness, where you belong to."

"You won't defeat Ryuko."

"I don't need to defeat Ryuko, I only have to break her."

"Then try it! Imma smash the entire building into thousands of pieces, asshole!"

Ichiro swings his scythe forward, yet Ryuko avoids. The glass under them breaks, electricity jumps out. With the scissor blades, she slams Ichiro away and into a wall, however, he quickly liquifies. Ryuko rips out the cables and throws them into the Director's direction, and they briefly cause him to take a few steps back. Ryuko escapes and gets closer to the power core.

"We gotta get Masaru, protect him and then get the hell out of here once Mikisugi and the rest arrives!" Ryuko says.

"Alright. Don't get too cocky now!"

"I've learned my lesson, Senketsu! Otherwise I wouldn't be running right now!"

"Okay!"

Ryuko kicks open the door and suddenly finds herself back in the lower city! Red lights at the corners of the walls enliven the glass hall. When she looks down, she realizes most of the shafts in the lower city seem to be connected with Neo-REVOCS!

"What the hell are these guys doing with the people here!?"

"I suppose you could..." suddenly the door is slammed open and particles fly into Ryuko's direction.

"... cover traces, gain energy from the poverty of these vermin, create new Couturiers, you name it, Matoi! The lower city is the perfect place to gain resources! All the Couturiers you saw, they once were humans, until they've been recycled, and finally, the Threads of Fate brought them back to live!" Ichiro laughs.

"You sick bastard!"

"What's sick about that? Isn't it similar to what you are doing to this planet? Aren't you just as parasitarian as we are!? Look at your Kamui! It feasts on you and you let it get away with that!"

"But Senketsu doesn't do it because he wants to take me down one day, but because we are friends and because we need to work together!"

"I'll get that Kamui back, Matoi. Just you wait." he smiles.

"You'd gotta kill me first to get it!"

"Oh I will if you don't comply."

Ryuko swings the scissor blades onto the glass ground and destroys it. The glass scatters apart, Ichiro jumps at a wall and liquifies into Life Fibers, Ryuko retreats while the ground behind her falls into the lower city. When she reaches the door to the power core, Ichiro actually is able to catch up on her and grabs her. Both roll onto the solid concrete ground in front of the door, Ryuko tries to kick him off, yet she rolls onto the edge of the ground and nearly falls down. The scissor blades are on the ground behind Ichiro. He smiles and looks down to her.

"You'll never learn that you can't run away from me, I'll catch you anyway. Once the Ashigaru are gone, my Couturiers will find you somewhere in the lower city, and then I'll do much more than just taking away your limbs, my dear." he chuckles.

"Director!" Masaru yells. Ichiro turns around and is then kicked down by Masaru. His boss falls into the lower city, about hundred meters down and into a building. Masaru picks up Ryuko.

"You alright?"

"Mhm."

"I have no clue how you got here and why you got arms and legs, but I won't question it. He must have searched for me. Come, the power core is close, once we are done we can escape this place!"

Ryuko and Masaru walk through additional halls.

"So how long does this place exist now?"

"Since Kiryuin-Corp. Back then, the lower city was nothing like what it is today. We used it for production, since REVOCS however, humans are abducted and abused for experiments. I found out about this a few days ago."

"Well damn. Aight, we gotta do whatever we have to do and get away."

"Indeed." Masaru answers. Ryuko and Masaru arrive at the large power core. Several dozens of Ashigaru lower their weapons as they see them approach the core. The hall is built in an hexagonal way, and on each corner are elevators that lead up to the complex of the building again. Looking up, Ryuko can see the night sky. Several Ashigaru sit at the core and prepare explosives on it.

No matter where Ryuko looks at - the walls are full of cables and power circuits connected with the power core. The core is a tower like object in the middle of the room, about 35 meters tall and protected with concrete and steel plates, and in the center of the tower is a large, red cube that shines up. The object must have incredible power and it's most likely Life Fibers that give it more energy. Based on the red, transparent cables that lead into the

power core and the capsules next to the elevators, filled with a red liquid, Ryuko can guess how the Life Fibers can keep up the energy for it. Fueling the Life Fibers with blood grants them energy - this must exist since REVOCS too.

"It's getting sicker and sicker, dude." Ryuko mumbles and notices doors exploding around them. Couturiers and Samurai attack them, but the Ashigaru do an decent job in at least holding them back - they won't win, but they don't have to. Explosions above them can be heard too - Ryuko and Masaru are about hundred to hundred twenty meters down below the surface.

"Might take two or three more minutes and we are done, Matoi!"

"How did you prepared all of this in such a short time!?"

"Some of my old COVERS friends were still in the lower city and we had explosives here, the rest was done by the Ashigaru when you were out of commission."

"You know all of this is risky as hell, right?"

"Of course. But it's still better than being enslaved by living clothing."

"... they aren't all just clothing, but I get what you are saying. These guys need their asses kicked, pronto."

Suddenly, red energy waves hover through the air. The waves destroy a part of the fighting Ashigaru, Ryuko and Masaru duck down, the Ashigaru continue their work. Ichiro appears at the entrance. His scythe shines up in red. With it's top, he aims at them.

(AN: If you feel like it, listen to "Battleground Arasaka" from Cyberpunk 2077 on YouTube.)

"I'll deal with him, you do your job." Ryuko tells Masaru. He nods and walks to the core.

"Got it."

"My plan was and is perfect! You should have stayed in the dark halls until the High Entity would have judged you! It could have been so easy!"

"What the hell does the Entity even want from me?!"

"It wants revenge... for what you did to it and to us!"

"Then F off! I ain't gonna kill anyone but if you force me to I will! I ain't gonna let you destroy this world!"

"Works for me!"

"But when I'm done with you you'll wish you'd never visited this world in the first place, idiot!" Ryuko yells and attacks Ichiro. Ichiro jumps to the side, attacks Ryuko, the scythe almost hits her back, however, she parries, turns his weapon around and cuts open his upper body. Blood and Life Fibers leave the wound!

"You're fighting your own people, Matoi."

"No matter if I fight humans or Life Fibers, both are my "own people"!"

"And still you choose to protect the weaker life forms! Why?! We could form your dirty sister into a Life Fiber as well! Just like her worthless mother!"

"They're my friends though! That's why I'm fighting! I don't give a shit if they are humans, like Satsuki, Mikisugi or Sanageyama, or Life Fibers like Nui and Senketsu!"

"How noble of you!" Ichiro grins and slams the scythe onto the ground, shock waves slam Ryuko at the tower. Her head breaks open, but she can still fight, while the Life Fibers regenerate her again. With Life Fibers, Ichiro drags Ryuko to him - he tied them around her neck. Ryuko cuts the Life Fibers away with a scissor blade and continues the fight.

Due to the destroyed Ashigaru, the defence of the power core has gotten more difficult than it already was. More Couturiers and Samurai approach the facility. In the sky, explosions are visible.

"Look at what you and these traitors are doing. Even if I would not be here, you would destroy thousands of working places here!"

"If it wouldn't be for you we wouldn't even have this bullshit now!"

"Oh yes, you are right, my bad! Ahaha!" Ichiro laughs and raises his hand, with which he forms Life Fibers. With these, he attacks Ryuko, as if he would be using a whip, or Nui's old measuring tape. The attacks are so fast that Ryuko cannot dodge them, and even though the wounds aren't incredibly deep, they hurt anyway. Ashigaru fire at Ichiro, but the Anti Life Fiber needles can't harm the Director.

The more Ryuko is hit by Ichiro, the stronger her powers become, like once with Senketsu Kisaragi. She lowers her weapons to get hit on purpose, the cut wounds look nasty, but her black arms lighten up more and more. Ryuko laughs evil, however, Ichiro does the same.

"Matoi, you think I don't know what you are planning!?" Ichiro asks and slams with the measuring tape on the ground. Life Fibers crawl onto the ground and drag Ryuko's arms down to absorb their powers. Ryuko didn't expected that to happen, but still, she can counter by liquifying into Life Fibers herself and jumping onto Ichiro, then forming back into a human and attacking him with the black arms. She forms the arms into needles and cuts him open partially, but Ichiro smiles and kicks her away. Masaru yells at Ryuko.

"MATOI! The elevators are activated, get one, now! We got five minutes before everything goes to hell here!"

"And what's with you!?"

"I'll get out of here, don't worry about me!"

Ryuko retreats to the elevator, however, the Couturiers fire at her with additional needles.

"Don't get hit too much by them! They will weaken both of us!"

"Yeah, I gotcha, Senketsu!" Ryuko answers and starts blocking as she lands on the platform. Ichiro liquifies into Life Fibers and jumps up to the elevator as it starts going up. Ryuko notices how Masaru is able to escape as well.

"Apparently Nudist Beach is here, otherwise the turrets wouldn't start firing in the air!" Ichiro points out when he sees the explosions in the sky.

"You lost, asshole."

"And still, you won't escape." he grins and attacks Ryuko once more. Ryuko blocks the attacks of the enforcer and takes a few steps back - she has to be careful since there isn't much space to move around on the elevator. The heat that comes from the overheating pore core can harm Life Fibers severely if they are too close to it. Fire's break out down there.

"This place will not be destroyed, Matoi. My Couturiers cannot fail."

"Oh you'd be surprised!"

Ryuko builds her scissor blades together and tries to cut Ichiro into halves with an attack that covers the largest part of the elevator, however, he ducks down, and only his tie on the head is cut apart. He takes the advantage into his hand by attacking Ryuko with the scythe and hitting her black right arm. Blood flows out, but she can't feel severe pain on it anymore. The scissor blades fall onto the ground and split apart, Ryuko catches them and shrinks one of them, then continues to fight with her left arm.

"Even with improved arms you are just as weak as usual!"

"But you'll need more to kick my ass! Your Life Fiber friends are pretty decent people, these arms are neat, not gonna lie!" she provokes, knowing fully well Ichiro hates hearing this, and he does, as he starts grumbling annoyed. His wrath can be felt latently. It can't be she just stood up again!

Ichiro, again, attacks Ryuko, yet she dodges and hits him with the scissor blade. The glasses above them that cover the complex break apart, thousands of shards fall into the shaft, Ryuko protects herself with Senketsu. Ichiro destroys all incoming shards with Life Fibers, but this gives Ryuko time to attack him. Ichiro slams onto a wall, but he just laughs.

"You can't defeat me, no matter how often you hit me!" he says. Explosions let the walls crumble, and suddenly, a rocket launched by Nudist Beach flies into the elevator shaft and destroys the walls on the other side. The lower city is revealed there. Time is running out.

"I don't need to defeat you!" Ryuko yells. As Ichiro is about to approach Ryuko, the elevator arrives on the surface again. A large battle occurs around them - Nudist Beach and Ashigaru fight against Samurai and Couturiers. Buildings are burning, craters are everywhere, Nudist Beach helicopters hover above the battlefield, and in the sky is the large Zeppelin. Ichiro looks up.

"A Zeppelin... is that humanity's best weapon against me?" he asks and attacks Ryuko, ramming the dull side of the scythe against her. Ryuko is slammed into a car. As he approaches Ryuko to incapacitate her, Ryuko's black right arm regenerates, and with it, she parries the scythe attack. The other arm is used to cut off Ichiro's hand. Ichiro takes a few steps back, a single Life Fiber keeps his hand connected with him. Then, an explosion hits both of them and they are launched away from each other.

Ichiro looks around, but Ryuko is gone. In the background, Ichiro can hear a man yelling.

"MEN! DO! KOTE!"

As Ichiro turns around, he sees Sanageyama. He approaches him. Sanageyama smiles when he notices him as well.

"Hey, dickhead! Wanna fight a real man?!" Sanageyama asks.

"Bring it on." Ichiro answers and attacks Sanageyama - and then, Ryuko appears and just rams Ichiro away.

"Man." Sanageyama mumbles.

Ryuko continues the battle with Ichiro and slams him with the scissor blades into a building. Ichiro jumps out instantly however and looks at Ryuko menacingly.

"Fine, Matoi." Ichiro says evil and rams his scythe into the ground, more powerful, stronger, and his body glows up red. The slam breaks the ground and launches away countless of units on the battlefield, and Ryuko also lands several meters on the ground again and slams her head open. Ryuko coughs as smoke arises. Fire lightens up the area slightly. Ichiro notices Masaru retreating in the background.

"This worthless dog. I ain't gonna let you run away!" he yells and orders his Couturiers to attack Masaru. He points with his hand at them. All remaining Couturiers open their fire on Masaru. Ryuko attacks Ichiro from the smoke and cuts open his face slightly.

"What's wrong, bitch boy?!" Ryuko asks. Ichiro holds his hand onto his wound.

"Grrr..."

It's well noticable how Ichiro slowly goes mad, seeing all the destruction. This was his plan - this should have been perfect. Now the High Entity betrays him, and Nudist Beach destroys everything. Seeing how his own men turn on him and even Ryuko getting her limbs back makes him mad. Ichiro grabs her with his hand and

throws her onto the ground, then, Ichiro moves his scythe around and seems to go for an execution.

"You worthless whore destroyed EVERYTHING THAT COMES INTO YOUR PATH, FOR WHAT!? FOR THESE WORTHLESS FRIENDS!? YOU ARE PATHETIC!"

"Fuck you!" Ryuko yells as an helicopter appears above them. Ryuko tries to retreat, yet she cannot properly block Ichiro's attacks and loses her scissor blades.

"Who cares what the High Entity says?! It's against me... just like everyone else, ahahaha! Die already!" Ichiro screams laughing and goes for an overhead attack, and as the scythe is about to hit Ryuko, blood spreads. A large blade pierces Ichiro's torso and rips him open, splitting him into half.

"... grrr..." he grumbles and falls dead onto the ground. The scythe dissolves. Satsuki is behind him.

"Ryuko." Satsuki says.

"SATSUKI!" Ryuko yells, puts her scissor blades down and hugs Satsuki, Satsuki hugs back briefly. Explosions around them cause them to retreat.

The explosives go off below the surface, the power core malfunctions and breaks apart, and causes the Neo-REVOCS energy to turn off. The lights go out, and the ground below Ryuko and Satsuki breaks apart.

"Come!" Satsuki yells to her sister and climbs with her to the helicopter that threw out ropes. Both climb them up. Ichiro stands up and notices how Ryuko and Satsuki retreat. Behind him, the shaft that leads to the power core explodes, and fire rises out of it. The psychopath looks around annoyed. Everything is destroyed. Everything is lost. The Couturiers aim on the helicopters that are retreating. Ichiro notices Masaru retreating with a helicopter as well.

"... but I'll take you with me, Masaru." Ichiro mumbles evil and throws his scythe toward the helicopter, hitting it and bringing it back to the ground. Eventually, the fire waves from the elevator shaft catch up with Ichiro and burn him alive, incapacitating him again. Ryuko and Satsuki can escape with the helicopter, even though the explosions and shock waves cause it to shake.

Both watch how the entire Neo-REVOCS headquarter burns down due to the core explosion. The tower breaks into two halves, the upper part explodes in the air. Fire is everywhere... destruction is everywhere.

Ryuko and Satsuki, as well as the Nudist Beach members watch everything burn down. The destruction reveals the lower city... but due to all the heavy destruction, the energy around Neo-REVOCS is cut off as well. Half the city goes dark. Even though Neo-REVOCS lost it's most important facility, there isn't a real reason to be happy right now. Satsuki removes the blood on her face and puts down her spear like weapon. Ryuko transforms back into her normal version and looks to her wounded arm that is now regenerated.

Satsuki notices the arm. She is speechless. For a moment, Ragyo's influence is gone - instead, she looks shattered. Like she failed in protecting Ryuko.

A single tear leaves her eye.

"... I'm sorry, Ryuko." Satsuki mumbles. Ryuko looks into Satsuki's face and hugs her.

"It's okay." Ryuko answers and holds her head against Satsuki's. She nods and sighs, then lets off of her little sister to sit down. Slowly, the helicopter arrives at the Zeppelin again. When it finally lands on a platform, Ryuko and Satsuki leave it. The other elite four are well from the looks of it, and Mikisugi has been waiting eagerly from the looks of it. But when they all see Ryuko's limbs, no one knows what to say. The black limbs just appear so wrong and strange.

(AN: Listen to "Things Right and Wrong" from "This War of Mine" on YouTube.)

"Iori... maybe can help you." Satsuki says. Ryuko shakes her head.

"No... only Nui can now." Ryuko answers. Satsuki seems perplexed.

"... Nui is imprisoned. She came back. When I heard what she did to you... I couldn't let her get away with that. Once we are back, you can take revenge for our dad. I don't care anymore. She needs to be culled." Satsuki says. Ryuko reacts shocked.

"Nui hasn't done anything though!"

"... what?"

"She hasn't done a single thing. She must have brought Mako to a safe place! The plan was that we'll meet up at Nudist Beach again! Why... what... you...?" Ryuko asks worried. The others are all confused.

"Ryuko?"

"Satsuki, she's our little sister."

"She says that because she believes it, but she is not, Ryuko. Mother made her think she is. She..."

"Satsuki, I'm not joking!"

"... how do you want to know that?"

Ryuko breathes in and out.

"... I spoke with dad."

Shock and silence.

...

"He's her father too. I saw it. Everything. I was dad. I saw him... I saw moms memories... your's, and Nui's..."

"What happened?"

"If we don't get back to the base ASAP she'll kill herself!"

"But..."

"NO BUT, SATSUKI!" Ryuko yells. Satsuki stays quiet.

"I don't want her to die! Alright?! I saw her die once, I ALMOST KILLED HER!... and I regretted it! The Life Fibers offered me to kill her by manipulating her memories in a way that they would collide with her current mind set, and I think right now she is breaking apart!"

"But Ryuko, she is a psychopath, she..."

"Who gives a shit?! It's our fucking sister! She cried! Several times! I felt what she felt! There is nothing left anymore! She's lonely as hell, she just wants a sister, ANYONE WHO CAN BE HER FRIEND! When I saw her on the ground at the mansion... she cried... and there I realized what the hell I was doing."

"..."

"Of course she is a psychopath! Of course she is evil! She isn't a good person! But god damn it! I can't let her die! She is family, still. All the things she did... she did them all because she wanted a family. I felt her emotions when she decapitated herself.

There is nothing more cruel than that. I don't want her to die... just like I don't want you to die... cause we all are sisters, and we need to stay together, despite all of our issues and conflicts... and I know now when Nui lies and when not... and trust me... she says the truth. She always did."

Ryuko seems frustrated. Satsuki looks down.

"... Mikisugi..." Satsuki mumbles.

"I'll get things going." Mikisugi answers and runs to the bridge of the Zeppelin. The zeppelin leaves Tokyo finally...

... but will there be enough time to save Nui from suicide? A person as tormented as Nui over all the years might only find peace now in death, even if it scares her...

...

AN: Part 2 will be done on Sunday or Monday. Let's pray Nui doesn't do anything stupid...

Sharing Tears Together In The Darkness 2

AN: You might cry - I did. Have fun reading.

A few hours later...

Sirens are audible. Firefighters have arrived in an attempt to combat the fire in the complex, but they make barely any progress. Ruins are everywhere. Everything is burning. Parts of the lower city have been revealed, water pipes are broken and power circuits destroyed. Craters are everywhere. The streets are destroyed, and the once great Neo-REVOCS HQ is no more.

Ichiro rises up from the ashes. His body is burned, half his clothes are destroyed. When he stands up and looks around, dead Couturiers, Samurai, Ashigaru and Nudist Beach soldiers lie around. The psychopath wanders around while examining the battlefield. His wounds regenerate quickly, his shirt is regenerating as well. Smoke dominates the battlefield hence why it's making the vision here difficult. People are moaning in pain.

Suddenly, he can hear debris falling down behind him. A burned Couturier approaches him. His Life Fiber form is revealed, and he is burning.

"... Director..." the Couturier mumbles. Ichiro looks down to him. He falls down.

"How... could this happen?"

Ichiro looks around.

"This must have been the High Entity. One, or several of them must have betrayed us. They gave Matoi her arms and legs." the Director admits angered.

"Why... would our excellence do that?"

"... they might be afraid of our power. Or they betray us in the belief we will fail. How should I know it?" he asks his henchman. The Couturier does not answer, his empty eyes stare around.

"Look for more of us. Leave no human alive. We shall collect ourselves and move to Nagoya."

"And our plan?"

"... oh, we'll give the Entity Matoi and Kiryuin... but the rest... we'll take up on it."

"As you wish." the Couturier answers and examines the area. Ichiro's bow on his head is burned away. He shrugs and moves on the field of his seemingly own failure, when in truth it was caused by Hinata, Masaru, Ryuko and Nudist Beach.

Minutes pass in which the Director walks around. Here and there, he can find a single Couturier, only Masaru seems to have disappeared. He finally arrives at the entrance of the Neo-REVOCS HQ.

But even here, nothing is left. Everything is gone. Ichiro is unsure whether he should laugh or anger. The reception has been destroyed. Only dead people are here.

"Why would the High Entity allow such heresy?" he wonders quiet.

...

Hinata is in the dark halls of the Life Fibers. Via Memory Fibers, he was observing the destruction. Looking around, new black Life Fibers fall from the sky.

All of them are dead.

"This is not Matoi's fault. She is adapting. She's learning." he thinks. Slowly wandering through the halls, a quiet melody is audible. It sounds like the Life Fibers are mourning over their dead comrades. At least those who follow Hinata mourn - and those are the Life

Fibers who seem to seek for an answer to the question of what empathy means. Millions of Life Fibers might sound like a lot, but in truth, these numbers are surprisingly small, if they would form into semi human beings, like the Life Fiber Beings the Couturiers are. It might be about a few hundred

However, as Hinata welcomes those who have left the world of the living, he is called by the High Entity and dissolves. His mind goes back into the throne room, where the High Entity stands at the descent to the Life Fibers, which are longing for food. The Entity observes the space. Far in the distance, the earth is visible. As long as the High Entity obtains the control, Hinata cannot move or think on his own, unless the Entity allows him to by creating copies. One of them could be Hinata then.

A door opens behind the Entity. It's Ichiro. He calmly watches the Entity.

"You came back..."

"Matoi escaped from the dark halls and destroyed Neo-REVOCS." Ichiro says directly. This comment causes silence inside the Entity. It slowly walks back onto the throne. Ichiro watches it closely.

"How could this happen?" it asks.

"Yeah... how could this happen...?" Ichiro asks sarcastic and takes a few steps forward, yet he stays away from the steps. He points at the High Entity with a finger.

"One of you gave Matoi her limbs back. None of my Couturiers are able to regenerate Life Fibers that have been severed. Only Entities can do that. So... who was that?" Ichiro asks angry. The Entity seems unimpressed.

"You speak to us, as if we would be your enemy?"

"I want to know who is responsible for this mess! A large part of my units have been destroyed, without Neo-REVOCS, I can barely coordinate movements!... only Nagoya is left."

"And yet... it was not Us that caused your failure." the Entity answers. Ichiro stays cautious.

"It was one of you. Question is, who..."

The Entity ignores Ichiro and looks away from him. Copies of the Entity appear and look down to him. One of them is Hinata. Ichiro approaches them and walks past them slowly.

"I wonder who could have done such a thing..." he mumbles towards the six Entities next to him. All Entities are unable to express any emotions - there is no real way of determining who it was.

"Was it you, Hinata?" Ichiro asks. Hinata watches Ichiro.

"Or you, *incomprehensible*?"

None of the Entities answer. They ignore his reactions, but he's making absolutely clear he does not trust them.

"One of you did this... and I'll find out who."

"We will soon arrive on the planet." the Entity answers. Ichiro ignores said answer and dissolves.

"We should observe him. He seems unstable..." one of the Entities say.

"Dangerous." another one says.

"He does not trust us." Hinata mentions. The High Entity stands up.

"If he disobeys, he shall repent. Just like humanity will. Their existence is a sin..."

...

As Ichiro arrives with his mind back into the Neo-REVOCS headquarter, he moves outside. A few groups of Couturiers have arrived. Most of them are revealed as Life Fiber Beings.

"Director, we've found someone that might need your attention." a Couturier mentions and throws a human to Ichiro.

It's Masaru. He's slightly wounded, his clothes are burned. Ichiro looks down to him. As Masaru looks up, he seems apathic, yet he is not scared.

Ichiro chuckles and shakes his head.

"... without my... Ashigaru... you can't fulfill your plans anymore." Masaru taunts Ichiro. Ichiro looks at the Couturiers.

"Process him." he orders. Masaru chuckles evil and coughs blood. Followed up by that, three Couturiers approach Masaru and sew Life Fibers onto his bare back.

"Nudist Beach knows everything about us. The factories... our plans... where we stored our Life Fibers... it's just a matter of time until you lose."

"Oh... I'm sure I lose everything." Ichiro smiles and forms his arm into a Life Fiber one - it's frighteningly deformed.

"But even if I would have nothing left, I'd still win." he continues. The Couturiers take a few steps back and then start raising their arms up. After short time, Masaru's body starts glowing in red. Red Life Fibers appear under his skin, and it seems like they are trying to burst out. Blood suddenly bursts out of his neck.

"And for humans, it would still be enough." Ichiro finishes and holds his hand onto Masaru's mouth. The man tries to scream, but only blood leaves his mouth, and this blood is collected by Ichiro. The

body shines up even more red, hair falls off, cloths break apart, the skin dissolves, Life Fibers burst out, and eventually, Ichiro rips his hand away from Masaru's mouth.

Masaru explodes into thousands of pieces, bloods scatters around everywhere, skin particles are left, and some flesh, but mostly, only blood is left, and new Life Fibers that are desperately trying to find a connection. The Couturiers suck on the blood that came onto her bodies.

"Worthless trash." he mumbles and turns around to the burning Neo-REVOCS headquarter. His Couturiers stand behind him.

"Soon, we won't be the ones obeying to the High Entity... why give away the Life Fibers, if we can keep them for ourselves?" Ichiro asks and looks at his Couturiers. They slowly kneel down in front of him.

He smiles sinister.

...

It's midnight. Ryuko runs through the already emptied halls of the Nudist Beach base. No one is awake anymore. Swiftly, she runs through the halls until she finally arrives at the dorms. Nui's door is still closed, and you cannot open it up as an ordinary human without tools. But Ryuko is not an ordinary human.

"Oh no..."

Ryuko tries to kick open the door. With her new Life Fiber legs, this is done rather well. Slowly but steady, the door breaks. Her kicks are getting stronger, and finally, the door is slammed open slightly.

(AN: Listen to "We Keep Going" from "This War of Mine" on YouTube.)

Ryuko can hear Nui whimpering behind the door. She opens it.

Nui sits there in a corner.

"Nui...?" Ryuko asks worried her little sister.

"DON'T HURT ME!" Nui yells scared. Carefully, Ryuko advances. Nui sits there, crying in the corner.

"I don't want to hurt you!"

"YES, YOU DO! YOU ALREADY DID IT! MY HEAD HURTS SO MUCH! YOU... YOU, YOU PLAY AROUND IN MY HEAD! YOU WANT TO GET RID OF ME JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE! THIS IS UNFAIR! WHY IS EVERYONE SO MEAN TO ME!?"

"Listen to me please, Nui, I..."

"Listen!? Why should I listen to you?! So that you can cut me into two parts!? JUST LIKE YOU ALMOST DID BEFORE!? I WON'T LET YOU DO THAT!"

"Please..."

Ryuko comes closer and closer. Suddenly, Nui rips out her heart and holds it up. The heart is beating extremely fast.

"I WON'T LET YOU KILL ME! RATHER DO I KILL MYSELF! I SHOULD HAVE JUST STAYED DEAD!" she cries and tries to crush her heart with her hands, blood leaves it. Ryuko, scared by this, runs towards her little sister.

"DON'T DO THIS, NO!" she screams and jumps against Nui, holds her heart and keeps it tight in her hands, then she looks into her little sisters crying face.

She is completely destroyed.

Every single Fiber in her face says the same thing - that everything should end, after all this time.

"Please... please don't do this... okay?!" Ryuko asks and tries to catch breath. Nui doesn't answer, but her eyes are still tearing up in

shock.

"Don't do this to me now!" her big sister says desperate.

"But you want to..."

"No, I don't, Nui! I don't want you to die! I don't want you to hurt yourself and I don't want anyone to hurt you anymore!" Ryuko answers and starts tearing up herself. Nui trembles.

"... after all... you are my little sister... aren't you?" Ryuko starts crying and hugs Nui. When Nui feels Ryuko's arms on her back, she breaks down and starts crying. Ryuko can't keep it up either. Both just hold each other tight, the door slowly closes, darkness conquers the room, but both stay in the corner, no one leaves the other.

"... I don't want to be clothing anymore..." she cries sad. Ryuko holds her tight. Every single tear is genuine, all of them consist of loneliness and sadness, gathered over all these years, and Ryuko feels that - it's why it's so impossible for her to keep her calm. Ryuko herself knows how it's like being alone.

"... you're not clothing..." she whispers into Nui's ear and pets her hair. Only now Ryuko really notices how cold Nui's body really is. There is barely any warmth. Senketsu grieves as well.

"... why is everyone mean to me, Ryuko...? I haven't done anything... I... I didn't do anything bad... no... no I did not..."

"Of course you didn't. They started it. They are... they are the meanies." Ryuko hugs Nui even more.

"I... killed dad, I... my... I..."

"I know... and it's okay. Dad... is not angry at you... I... saw him in the halls... I... I forgive you... I can't forgive you everything... but it's okay..." Ryuko answers and holds her face next to Nui's hair. Nui digs herself into Ryuko. The little sister can't stop crying, and neither

can Ryuko. Both just sit there in the corner and cry together. The longer Ryuko holds her little sister, the more she understands what it means to protect someone, to have an instinct for protection - and now she also understands why Satsuki was behaving the way she did.

Ryuko is a big sister too now, and as such, she can and should protect her family and her little sister, just like Satsuki does with her. And seeing Nui so destroyed, so broken and lonely - even though Nui is not a good person, that is too much for her. In the end, Ryuko knows how Nui feels, and her heart says to give up the hate. Ryuko carefully pushes back Nui's heart into her body, and thus, the wound starts regenerating again, then Ryuko continues hugging Nui. The little sister breathes in and out scared. Ryuko can feel her anxiety, just like Senketsu.

"Everything will be okay again, Nui." Ryuko comforts her. Nui nods swiftly and short.

"... mhm... ok-okay... I... I just don't want to... to... t-to be al-lone... I..." and Nui starts crying even more.

"You're not alone. You're never going to be alone anymore... I know how you feel... and I am sorry..."

Ryuko leans to the wall next to them and continues to hold Nui. Nui keeps her head close to Ryuko's shoulders. Senketsu looks at her and tries to warm Nui up, and it works. Slowly but steady, the cold body warms up again.

"Some... sometimes I am dreaming... of how... how I die and I... I'm so scared... I don't want to go back... not now... not like this, I... I don't, I..."

"Shh... I know... I saw what happened. Everything will be okay again... trust me."

"... o... okay..." Nui answers. Ryuko pets her hair and the back. After two minutes, it seems like Nui has calmed down. She looks to the ground. A burned clone of her lies there. Her head still lies on Ryuko's shoulder. Ryuko observes the darkness. There is a little light coming from the door - just like the absolute emptiness. The light always seems to mark the exit. The emptiness... the darkness... this is Nui's biggest nightmare. Ryuko looks back at Nui, who's laying calm on Ryuko.

"Do you... want to go into my room?"

"... mhm..."

"Alright. Then come. Don't worry. They all are away. No one will hurt you." Ryuko comforts Nui. Both stand up, even though they still have a few tears to share. Ryuko holds Nui carefully and close to her. The little sister doesn't even look forward, she just holds her face towards Ryuko's shoulder. Carefully, Ryuko grabs the scissor blades and shrinks them, then she puts them into Senketsu's pocket and opens the door. With Nui, she walks through the dorms. When she opens the door to her room, she brings Nui to her bed and then gives her a blanket with which she covers her. Finally, Ryuko looks around. Everything is the same. The TV is still here too.

Nui looks to the ground.

"... Ryuko...?"

"Yes?"

"... I don't want Satsuki to hate me."

"She doesn't hate you. I promise. She... just needs time. But everything will be okay. It always will be okay sooner or later." Ryuko kneels down to Nui and holds her face up. If someone would see Nui like this and say that this is the psychopathic Grand Couturier of REVOCS - no one would believe it. She rather looks like a little, lonely child.

And she is a child - mentally left alone in a childhood she never had.

"You can stay here with me. I still have a mattress left under my bed, I'll grab it out later, then you can sleep here."

Nui slowly nods sad. Ryuko looks into her face... and then she gets an idea.

"I got something nice for you. Just stay here."

"No, please don't go away."

"I'll be back in a few minutes. Senketsu stays here with you, right, Senketsu?" Ryuko asks her friend.

"Of course."

Ryuko takes off Senketsu. She still wears a red shirt. Senketsu is dropped next to Nui, then, Ryuko leaves the room and locks it. Senketsu looks at Nui and climbs onto her lap. He hugs Nui with his sleeves. Nui carefully hugs back.

"I... think I understand... why you like Ryuko..." Nui mumbles sad.

"We are friends." Senketsu answers.

"... c-can... you be my friend too?" Nui asks careful - as if she is afraid Senketsu would hurt her if he says no. It's well noticable in Nui's eyes how scared she is. She always only takes a very brief look at Senketsu and then looks away, and her grip is very uncalm and weak. Senketsu hugs her tighter.

"We are friends already."

"... thank you..." Nui answers. Senketsu looks up to Nui.

"I know, a little bit of clothing is nothing compared to a human body, but I... well... I'm trying my best." Senketsu says jokingly to cheer up Nui.

"It's... okay..."

"I sometimes wish I would have a body too." Senketsu answers. Nui nods slowly and hugs him.

"I... think... me too..." she answers and leans her head to the wall. She looks around while digging herself into the blanket even more. Senketsu sits down next to Nui. She looks to him briefly.

"... you... died too... right?"

"Yes."

"... I... how... was that for you?" she asks carefully and looks back at the room. Senketsu thinks a brief moment.

"I... well... at one point, it was like... the lights would go off. I burned away."

"Did... it hurt?"

"Yes. I can't express how much. But I only wanted to protect Ryuko. I wasn't thinking of anything else anymore. So I tried to ignore it."

"... me too. And... where did you go to?"

"Into the halls. But there wasn't much left. A few memories, but not much. And you were sent into the emptiness. I... heard how someone was sent there. For the first time... after thousands of years."

"... yes. It was the High Entity. I... never did anything wrong. I couldn't know what would happen to... my... my... Shinra Koketsu, I... don't even know how it failed."

"I sucked Shinra Koketsu's powers into me. Briefly after, Ryuko asked her mother to give up. Instead, she committed suicide. She crushed her heart."

"... mama..." Nui mumbles sad.

"I miss her... she... she was mean... and a liar, and she... she did evil things... but she was nice... she gave me... I..." Nui stutters. Does Nui really know what Ragyo did to her? The illusion of Ragyo being a caring mother for her is still there, even though Nui knows Ragyo did evil things to her. Senketsu himself can really see now how Ragyo destroyed Nui. The same thing could have happened to Ryuko and Satsuki too. At least Nui knows now that Ragyo didn't have only good sides.

"It's... nice... not being alone..." Nui mumbles careful to Senketsu.

"I believe you."

After two minutes, the door opens, and Ryuko's shoe is visible.

"Oh man, dude, I'll tell you, carrying five things at the same time is really difficult, even with these plates." Ryuko chuckles and opens the door. Nui carefully looks up. Ryuko holds two plates with tasty snacks and cold sweets! She puts the plates onto her table and moves it next to the bed then. Nui and Senketsu look up.

"I've asked Mikisugi if we'd have any tasty stuff around here so he pulled out some of his personal storage in the fridge!" Ryuko chuckles. Nui smiles very carefully. Ryuko throws a yellow Pyjama to Nui, Ryuko grabs a red one. Then she walks into the bathroom and changes her clothes, and when she comes back, Nui wears a yellow Pyjama as well.

"This might cheer you up." Ryuko smiles. Nui doesn't answer, she's uncertain of what to say. Ryuko turns on the TV and jumps onto the bed, then she leans to the wall. Nui doesn't know what to do. How could she, she doesn't have any social experience.

"I'd eat the ice cream first if I were you. Vanilla and strawberry, just for you!"

"... thanks." Nui answer and carefully grabs her ice cream bowl. Ryuko starts eating the ice cream while Nui just sits there and watches Ryuko. But briefly after, since no one watches them, Nui carefully grabs the spoon and tries it herself, and soon, she can't stop until the little bowl is empty and a few minutes have passed. Ryuko drinks hot chocolate after that. Nui does the same, she even has a little chocolate moustache on her mouth. Her big sister starts chuckling. Nui blushes and removes the moustache again, then she puts down the tasty chocolate and lays her head onto Ryuko's shoulder again.

The big sister holds her arm onto Nui and holds her careful. Slowly but steady, Nui calms down again. Senketsu looks up to Ryuko and holds his sleeve against the pocket, where the vial with the cure for the Life Fiber Sickness is... and something else. Ryuko nods and puts her hand into Senketsu's pocket.

"Oh yeah, Nui?" Ryuko asks. Nui looks up to Ryuko.

"... yes?"

Ryuko pulls out Nui's old, yellow bow. It's a little dusty.

"Look what I found. A lil somethin." Ryuko smiles, removes the dust and carefully puts the bow onto Nui's head.

"... yellow fits much better to you than pink anyway." Ryuko smiles and hugs Nui again.

"... th-thank you... I... haven't weared that bow... since..."

"... since you got that dress from Ragyo."

"Yes..." Nui answers and lays her head down onto Ryuko's shoulder again.

Both continue to watch TV. Every once in a while, they drink from the chocolate, or snack some of the popcorn Ryuko brought. The clock

says 1 AM, but they just continue to watch anyway. Ryuko doesn't want to leave Nui alone, she needs this right now. The TV goes on, Senketsu sits next to Nui instead of Ryuko for once. The young woman thinks about what happened the last days once more.

How everything started.

All the memories she lived through taught her one lesson: the act of revenge sometimes can lead to even darker paths and conclusions.

Of course, Ragyo had to be stopped, no doubt about that, but Satsuki's desire for revenge blinded her so much that she started considering her friends as tools and her students as cannon fodder, as resources.

Father Soichiro sought revenge for Ryuko's apparent death, and how Ragyo lost all of her humanity to the Life Fibers. For this, he founded an organization to defeat REVOCS - but in exchange for that he had to succumb to the power of the Life Fibers as well, and the tolls they were expecting. To defeat REVOCS, he had to sacrifice his daughter into loneliness and throw away the lives of many people, just to develop one Kamui that could stop Ragyo.

Ragyo once might have been a good person with a warm and kind soul, but her mother terrorized her. With her father disappearing and her mother constantly wishing death on her, Ragyo wanted immortality - all in the attempt to hinder her mother from this wish she had. And this corrupted her and made her the sick monster she was.

And the little sister Nui desperately tried everything to be part of a family she, at least from everyone else's stand point, should have never been. By torturing Nui into developing a hate for humans and Ragyo nurturing that hate, Nui believed Ragyo knew how the world works, and she believed Ragyo would care for her - and with that, she believed she could be her daughter, if she tried hard enough. It's

why Nui did everything to make sure Ragyo is satisfied, until she even stopped thinking and only performed.

(AN: Listen to "Boarding the Train / The Ride Home" from "The Polar Express" - specifically, you should listen to the part at 7:19 on YouTube. You might cry. I did. Here's a hug in advance. *hug*)

The entire Kiryuin family is a tragedy. But this tragedy might end soon. Maybe, maybe everything will be okay again. It once was okay. It can be okay again.

Ryuko yawns. It's 2 AM.

"Oh man... we really should hit the hay now, Nui. Imma prepare a mattr... Nui?" Ryuko asks. Nui has nodded off. She's sleeping on her arms. Ryuko tries to move, Nui's head carefully falls onto Ryuko's lap. She sleeps tight. Ryuko pets Nui's hair once more and chuckles briefly.

"Good night, little troublemaker." Ryuko smiles and turns off the lights. The mattress doesn't matter. It might be better if Ryuko just protects Nui this one night. She lays down into her bed and carefully drags Nui to her, and then, she closes her eyes and starts sleeping. Senketsu lays down to them as well...

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Nui is crying. Ryuko wakes up. The little sister is scared to death and trembles.

"... I don't want to die..." she cries. Ryuko comforts her and holds her tight.

"... everything will be okay, Nui."

"... it's still raining... it never stops raining..."

Ryuko comforts Nui.

"... I'm so scared..."

"... I know. Me too."

"... r-really...?"

"Yes. You are not alone anymore. If there is someone who tries to hurt you, Satsuki and me are on your side."

Nui nods crying. Ryuko cuddles her.

"... you... y-you know... I-I..."

"... yes?"

"... I... it... feels like home... being here..." she mumbles sad. Ryuko smiles. She looks at Nui the way Satsuki once looked at her when Shinra Koketsu was destroyed. Both just look at each other.

"I love you. Despite all the bad things on you."

"... I... love you too, big... sister..."

"... sleep well."

"... you too."

Ryuko holds Nui's head under hers and carefully pets her hair more. Slowly, Nui nods off. Ryuko tears up still, while time slowly advances. Her black arms shine blue, yellow, red and green.

Family. This is everything Ryuko wanted.

Now she is a big sister herself.

...

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AN: I think now you also understand why I had to brutalize Nui so much before. I hope you had fun with the chapter, if I made you cry, lemme know, I cried, lol. Well, we are almost done, the next chapter will take some time to be done, but yeah, if anything is up, I'll let you know somehow of course! For now, let's just be happy everything turned out okay again. :)

Also I've been looking forward to this moment since last year.

REVOCS Fashion Show

AN: Welcome back to the newest chapter! Hope you didn't missed Part 1 and Part 2 of Chapter 25 before, if so, you better read that first! If you did: great! This chapter will have some more light hearted and comedic stuff again even though the general, rather dark vibe still stays at certain points. Hope you enjoy it! And apologies for taking so long, been pretty busy with school! :D Check out the new story image, you can get a look at Satsuki's enhanced Wrath Regalia and her weapon!

Waves slam against the walls of the Honnouji Academy. The ocean is uncalm - from here, you can still see the burning remains of the Neo-REVOCS headquarters. A grup of Couturiers and their master Ichiro arrive at the sunken isle. When the group reaches the inner parts of the academy and the large hall in which the former humans, now transformed into Life Fibers, are stored at, Ichiro and his henchmen observe the sheer amounts.

Not even the primordial Life Fiber could be compared with the amounts of Life Fibers visible here. And yet, just like back then, Life Fibers are everywhere. Humans who's minds were stitched by Life Fibers continued to enhance the halls in order to increase the storage capacity. There, the Elite Four Doppelgänger Ichiro resurrected when he arrived, guard the men and women and the Life Fibers. When they see the Director, they meet up with him, expecting orders. A Couturier takes a few steps forward to speak with his master.

"The High Entity betrayed us."

"Indeed they did."

"... how unfortunate."

"They'll pay."

"How?" the Couturier asks. Ichiro smiles mischievous and raises his arms towards the indescribable amounts of Life Fibers - as he does that, Life Fibers crawl towards him. They seem to create something like a diorama for him and his entourage. It seems as if he wants to explain his new Life Fiber henchmen his plan.

"Many thousands of years ago, when the High Entity created our Layer, and with that, a temporary world habitable for the Life Fibers, it needed the strength and energy of all those around it. It changed our species entirely. Before this very deed, we were different. Not dependant on other life forms, not dependant on the energy a Being had to fuel us. When the Layer was created, it changed us entirely." he explains as the Life Fibers he summoned create a picture of the High Entity slowly, seemingly "stitching" and "sewing" the home they know today.

"Ever since the Layer exists, Life Fibers possess incredible powers - near immortality, indescribable strength, yet now we are dependant on the juice other life forms need to survive. In case of humans, blood. There always is an exchange behind the curtain - even for me, yet... what is the life of a single Life Fiber compared to mine, whenever I die?" he asks ironically. Does that mean whenever Ichiro is defeated in combat, he can return because he sacrifices his fellow Life Fibers in the dark halls?

The Life Fibers on the ground display the so called Layer of the High Entity - dozens of orb like large Life Fibers that are connected with each other. Large Life Fibers hang out of the orbs - in the center of the circle like appearance, the main object, the Layer, lies there. One can only imagine how large the Layer and it's connected orbs really are.

"And for many thousand years, the High Entity controlled it's offspring. Some gained consciousness, some gained empathy, and very few even managed to live without blood. Not the Entity, however. It's why it needs us. It wants a sacrifice in the form of many Life Fibers, created by human bodies, so that it can regain it's strength that it lost over the years. The Layer needs the strength of

the High Entity to terraform this world into a habitable place." Ichiro continues and lets the Layer hover up.

"But we won't let that happen. Not with the current Entity." he says and crushes the Layer. He then turns around.

"When the Layer is destroyed, all Life Fibers connected to the High Entity will vanish. We'll give it what it wants - Matoi and Kiryuin shall belong to the Entity. When the Entity is busy with them, we will bring back the thing the Entity needed to create the Layer back then... and the Life Fibers in this place will be the necessary sacrifice for this cause." he smiles and creates a large, strange Life Fiber Being, with horrible eyes, mouth, a deformed head, destroyed arms - and the body looks like shredded clothes.

"We shall revive what is known to humanity as Shinra Koketsu... we shall create it's true form... Shinra Seisei."

The Life Fibers that know of Shinra Koketsu's true Life Fiber Being form bow down in an instant, except for Ichiro.

"Shinra Seisei will sever our connection with the Life Fibers, and render us independent. No immortality for the Entity... and when the Layer is destroyed, Seisei will recreate it... and with this new Layer, controlled by me, we will finish the plan the Entity had in mind. A new caste of High Entity's will arise... and it will be us."

"As you wish, Director."

"Begin the creation." Ichiro orders and leaves the hall. The Couturiers around him approach the large Life Fiber masses...

...

No snow fall today. Ryuko and Satsuki walk through the forest on the island of Okishima around the base. It's a good time to talk with each other properly again after the last troublesome and exhausting events. As they walk through the forest, they find a little bench near

the coast, which they approach and sit onto to watch the water. After a few moments, Satsuki looks to Ryuko.

"It's been a while since we just... well, walked around. Without worrying about anything, I mean."

"Yeah."

"I... well... I made mistakes, once again."

"It's alright."

"..."

"..."

"I'm sorry."

"..."

"I just... didn't wanted anything to happen to you. And... now this. It's my fault."

Ryuko turns her head to Satsuki and smiles briefly.

"But I'm still alive, right? And that's the important part. Yeah, my arms and legs... they do feel pretty shitty, not gonna lie, but I'd rather have those than no limbs at all."

"I see. Ragyo, she, she tried to take over my mind... or my body."

"The hallucination?"

"Yes. I can still feel how it tries to take me over. She might be watching us somewhere."

"Even if. Fuck mom. I've seen all sorts of things, and I saw dad."

"You saw dad?"

"There are these halls, Satsuki. Halls the Life Fibers visit when they die. In these halls, you can find their memories, and those that are still alive... sometimes you can apparently look through their eyes, or hear what they hear. I saw one of those "High Entities"... it's name was Hinata. He sent me into the past to see how you, mom, dad and even Nui lived before we came to this point."

"How... was that?"

"Well... there was dad. When he was a boy, he was rather lonely and he wanted to study Life Fibers, and one day, he met Ragyo. Ragyo was terrorized by her mother, because our grandfather seemed to be corrupted by the Life Fibers, or connected with them. So grandmother wanted Ragyo to die, as she feared if Ragyo would be corrupted like grandfather, bad things could happen... and eventually, that happened. Mom killed her entire family. And Nui..." Ryuko says, yet struggles to continue. She bites her lips briefly.

"... Nui was always a psychopath, but... she didn't properly work because there was still a sense of empathy and kindness, so Ragyo decided to render Nui completely cold and hostile towards everyone that is not her or Ragyo. Like... she... she threw Nui into an empty, dark room and left her there for several months... or ignored birthdays... hell, she didn't even bothered with her unless Ragyo had a task for Nui."

"... I see."

"All of those memories however had one thing in common."

"That would be?"

"They all showed me what happens if you continue... like, when you continue and take revenge. Because grandmother terrorized Ragyo, she wanted revenge on her and she got that, but in exchange for that, the Life Fibers took her over and promised her all the powers one could imagine, even immortality, and she got that, remember? When dad found out what kinda sick experiments Ragyo had in mind

and what she did to me, dad founded Nudist Beach so that one day, REVOCS could be destroyed - but for that, he left both of us alone and sacrificed many lives, just so that he could create a Kamui like Senketsu, one that is capable of empathy, that can understand human emotions and one, that works better than Junketsu ever could. And because Nui wanted nothing but a family, Ragyo took that chance to build an enemy for her: humans. Nui hated them so much she didn't care for any of them, all she wanted was Ragyo to be happy and to accept her as a little daughter. Nui wanted revenge on humanity... and even killed dad."

Ryuko hesitates to continue.

"..."

"Satsuki, I'm scared of what will happen if we continue." Ryuko says. Satsuki looks into Ryuko's eyes. Honest fear. Those very slight, quick movements on her hands, the shoes that slowly move around, trying to find something to stand on...

"And what should we do?"

"... some of the Life Fibers aren't like the usual ones. Hinata, he, he is one of those Entities, and the Life Fibers follow those Entities. And it looks like some of them follow Hinata's... ideology, I guess. Like... some, including it... or him, or her... I don't know... they want to learn what empathy means. They want to know what it's like to feel emotions. They... don't want to be parasites. Nui was one of them, hence why she has a slight understanding of emotions."

"And we should negotiate with them?"

"No. I don't know whether we should negotiate or not. All I know is that not all of them are monsters. They might all be parasites, but some are more than that. And I find... we... maybe should give them the chance to, well, prove themselves. Like Senketsu, or Nui."

Satsuki doesn't know how to react. They both are quiet for a moment and just watch the water. Both women's breath is visible in the air. Then, Ryuko turns around to Satsuki again.

"And another thing, Satsuki."

"Yes?"

"I saw how Ragyo turned into a Life Fiber. She was ripped open, and Life Fibers were infused into her. The High Entity did that, it made a Life Fiber Being out of a human. I... wonder one thing."

"... you wonder whether the Entity can make a human out of Life Fibers?"

Ryuko nods slowly and uncertain.

"It's something you don't have to do, sis."

"I know. But the longer I deal with Life Fibers, the closer I feel to them. It got to a point where I was able to turn into a parasite, like the Life Fiber sickness, and by that I almost killed Nui. I really felt it. I really felt how I almost lost my mind myself. I only heard the Life Fibers singing in my head, I just wanted blood. It's... I... it's not like I mind having... "clothes" inside my body... it's just... I'm just scared this might happen again."

"I don't know what to say. It sounds so surreal."

"It is. You can't properly describe this. I saw myself as a Life Fiber Being. Like one of the Couturiers. We gotta make sure the Director disappears."

"Yes. And we need to deal with the Life Fiber Sickness. It makes everything harder than necessary." Satsuki says. Ryuko raises her eyebrows.

"About that... uh..." Ryuko says excited and moves her hand into Senketsu's pocket, where the vial with the cure is. There still is

something left in it. Satsuki doesn't believe what she sees.

"... while he did kinda fucked me up, this asshole wasn't lying when he said he could cure the Sickness inside me. He must have removed the parasite in my head too... sooo..." Ryuko grins. Satsuki carefully takes the vial with shining eyes.

"Is that..."

"Yup." Ryuko smiles. Satsuki's head slowly falls on Ryuko's shoulder next to Senketsu's eye, he looks up to her.

"Hey that's me." he comments

"I can't believe this." she smiles unsure.

"You better do. We gotta protect this thing at any cost. Bring it to a place no one would expect it at."

"I'll find something, you can bet on that!" Satsuki says excited. Ryuko nods trustful. Satsuki examines the vial rather in disbelief still, but happy nonetheless. The little sister in the meantime looks back at the water. Thanks to her Life Fiber arms and legs, she doesn't feel the cold as much as usual anymore.

"So whatcha think, Senketsu? How's the environment to you?"

"We have to explore more of Japan." he answers.

"Haha, yeah sure. Satsuki, we four have to travel Japan again sometime, aight?"

"... four?"

"Yup. You, Senketsu, Nui and me."

"... oh yes. Right. Nui as well." Satsuki answers and clears her throat. Ryuko notices Satsuki isn't feeling to well with the thought of having a psychopathic lunatic as little sister. And she can understand

that, based on her face expression. Ryuko tones down her enthusiasm a little bit.

"Give her a chance, please. Just a little one. You don't have to like her... I doubt many will like her anyway. But... you can't change it."

"I can't just let go, Ryuko. I can't just say "It's okay" to her and mother."

"You don't have to. I just want to say that... well, she's always going to be here for us. I mean she still will be a huge, mean asshole, but y'know?"

"... come to think of it... what was the reason of you forgiving Ragyo?"

"I wanted a family. Just a normal family. That's all. But mom didn't wanted to. I just wanted to give Nui the same chance... and despite all the evil things she did, she deserves that chance. Like I said... I saw and felt everything she felt, and from the three of us, she really got hit the hardest. Shit... dude... when she committed suicide... she did it with the thought she actually found a family. Now imagine you kill yourself in the belief you will be accepted... and then it was for nothing and you are even thrown away by literally everything you had left."

"... I... yes. That's... hard."

"If it doesn't work, Satsuki, ignore her. I won't blame you. I won't blame anyone who would react like that at one point. But... don't be mean to her, please. I'll make sure she won't be mean to you either. I can take her comments, I know she doesn't mean it like that, at least towards you and me... and probably Senketsu."

"I will try. But... I need time."

"Thank you."

"... it's alright.

...

Mikisugi in the meantime visits the workshop. The people there seem to be more motivated again now that the Neo-REVOCS headquarter has been destroyed. He also sees Iori who's working together with Nui on a few more outfits for Nudist Beach. It seems as if they both come along a little better now, even though Nui is still mean to him sometimes. Still, they both are tailors, they got something in common, and it shows.

"Mind you, you could use these needles over there, they'll make the sewing easier." Iori notes to Nui as she seems to be a bit slower than usual while she enthusiastically works on another piece of clothing. Nui looks to him.

"You talk to me as if I would be an amateur." Nui smiles and forms a finger of hers into a needle.

"I don't need these needles, love." she chuckles and continues. Iori simply nods, clears his throat and continues work without questioning.

Mikisugi smiles slightly and continues his journey through the base. Nonon and a bunch of Nudist Beach soldiers help her carry objects into the large hall in which the concert will start soon. Nonon herself watches how her musician clones carefully clean their instruments.

"Nonon!" Mikisugi yells.

"Hrmpf!? Who calls me!?" Nonon reacts and looks around. She sees Mikisugi down on the ground.

"I can see your concert preparations are going well."

"Finally all these monkeys here experience some proper culture in the form of glorious music!"

"Cool. You let me know if you need help or anything."

"Yup, yup!" Nonon answers and looks back to her clones. On the island surface, men and women maintain the zeppelin. Tsumugu watches them, Mikisugi approaches him.

"Hey Tsumugu."

"Mikisugi."

"So what do you think of the zeppelin?"

"It does it's job."

"You don't sound too glad."

"But it's not because of the zeppelin. After what Matoi told us about the Director and the Life Fibers, I'm just waiting for them to take revenge. If there really is something like a "High Entity" and if it's really as powerful as Matoi says, then we should be careful."

"Never thought I hear that word from you."

"Don't get me wrong - all Life Fibers need to be eliminated, I always said that, no matter how and no matter who, but if we take on against forces we don't understand we'll might have to reconsider our options."

"I mean... some of them are conscient. And there is this "Hinata" guy - might be worth talking to him?"

Tsumugu reacts shocked hearing Mikisugi saying this. Mikisugi seems to be serious about this suggestion.

"The hell you talking about?"

"Ryuko said there is the chance that some Life Fibers aren't exactly hostile, but more like her Kamui."

"We've founded this organization to destroy Life Fibers and not to ally with them."

"It's not about allying, Tsumugu. I'm on your side, believe me. But if there is a chance and some of them "are just like us", we may should investigate what this is all about. Look at our Life Fiber friends. Ryuko's Kamui for example - it doesn't want to hurt her. The stuff before wasn't even it's fault, that can be accounted to the Director."

"But it could hurt her. And that REVOCS psychopath can flip out any second if you provoke her in the slightest ways possible - first she choked Hoomaru, then she shot Gamagoori, what's next, Aikuro? Is she gonna aim her weapon at your or my head? I'm just waiting for that to happen."

"Ryuko keeps her under control."

"You say that as if Matoi would be an universal key to all our problems, but she is not."

"But she is human and Life Fiber. I trust her."

Tsumugu shakes his head, doubting, even after all these years he could trust Ryuko. The man looks to the ground and thinks about what to say next.

"I know, Tsumugu, I sound like I forgot what we had in mind when we first founded our organization. But you see, after all these years, and all the events that occurred... I mean..."

"Life Fibers will be our downfall if we aren't careful."

"That's true. I know you dislike my plans."

"I do, yeah."

"But if you see someone who might be able to redeem him or herself, maybe not entirely, but at least partially make up for what

they did - would you deny them that chance?" Mikisugi asks.
Tsumugu puts on a cigarette and pulls one.

"That won't bring Kinue back."

"It won't bring Isshin, Hoomaru and the lives of our friends back either. It won't heal Ryuko's bad memories either, or the scars you and me sustained during battles. But it doesn't have to bring something - or someone - back."

"... I don't know." Tsumugu answers.

Followed up by that, both men watch the zeppelin. Mikisugi seems to get used to the Life Fibers, or at least to Ryuko, Senketsu and Nui, and the new uniforms Iori developed. Do monsters like Life Fibers really have a soul, or do they deserve a second chance? He remembers Junketsu. In his last moments before Satsuki took his life, it became clear that the former Kamui never wanted to really fight his mistress. Senketsu, if dependant on Ryuko's blood, was always a friend for her and never tried to harm her on purpose. And even the psychopath that is Nui listens to Ryuko and Satsuki, and it's possible she can learn a few things from them. Tsumugu doubts all of this - but can he be blamed? He spent his life on fighting Life Fibers, of course he believes there can't be any redemption for them, and there doesn't necessarily have to be one. Maybe they really should all vanish. But that is just his belief.

Then, Houka comes from the side and speaks to them.

"Mikisugi, Tsumugu?"

"Hm?" Tsumugu grumbles.

"You want to see this." Houka smiles evil and walks with the two men to the inner parts of the base.

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A vehicle is driving through Ôsaka. It's passing through one of the rather quiet districts in the city. Takarada's men and women guard the city via the rooftops and are on the lookout - it became a fortress against Neo-REVOCS. With more people vanishing from the streets after wearing Neo-REVOCS clothes, people slowly seem to realize what the Director has planned. A group of Takarada's units collect Neo-REVOCS clothes just to burn them in the middle of the street, and next to them, there is a sign.

"Burn the Life Fibers." is written. The vehicle continues its journey through Ôsaka. It appears that several groups clear the streets and houses of Neo-REVOCS clothing. In the more populated parts of the city, people express their hostility towards the corporation - and Takarada uses this situation to earn even more money since people buy his anti REVOCS merch. The vehicle stops, and Sanageyama leaves it. He shakes his head when he sees how people buy Takarada's merch.

"Man." he mumbles and walks to the nearest post office. Inside, not much is going on. He's carrying two mails, from which one of them he takes a closer look again. It seems to be addressed to his father. Eventually, he delivers both mails and leaves the office again.

"... let's see if the old man answers." Sanageyama mumbles to himself and enters his car again.

...

Ryuko and Satsuki left the forest a while ago and slowly approach the walls of the Nudist Beach base. Ryuko explains more about Ragyo's background.

"... and that's why mom killed her brother and grandma. The Life Fibers corrupted her. They made her think they are her actual family. I think at this point she stopped caring for her life, all she wanted was to support them, and I guess... I guess that's why in the end she also killed herself, after all, there were no Life Fibers left on earth.

One thing I will never forget was this smile she put on. She knew Life Fibers would come back... but she didn't wanted to "suffer" by living with us."

"She was a sick monstrosity - putting these creatures above humanity. And then she escaped punishment. Sometimes... sometimes I could just... grr..."

"Eh. She's gone. Gotta be good enough."

"Yes." Satsuki answers. Both women arrive in the halls. They take off their jackets and split up, with Satsuki approaching Gamagoori while he's helping Nonon.

"Gamagoori."

"Lady Satsuki! Good morning, how have you been?"

"Passable. I see you are support Nonon."

"Yes. These clones are good and useful and Mikisugi's men do their job well too, but none of them can carry amounts of weight like I could. Quite honestly, I'm afraid of this concert." he grins.

"Oh, I'm sure Nonon won't overexaggerate." she chuckles.

"I trust she won't. She's been looking forward for this event ever since she announced it, I'm sure it will raise the moral here."

"Yes. Gamagoori, I have to go. We'll see us later." Satsuki says and leaves her friend. While she walks through the halls, Ragyo appears on her right and follows her slowly.

"You talk me down even though I helped you out...?"

"Leave it. With Ryuko back, my mind has been clearer than usual."

"Is it truly? I think you are simply... afraid of what might happen now. And more importantly... I believe you are afraid of me."

"Think what you want. I don't care."

"Mhm. You don't need to. Sooner or later you will. You will face the consequences of your deeds soon enough. One way or another. Unless you offer your life to the Life Fibers."

Satsuki smiles briefly as if her mother made a bad joke.

"Don't make me laugh." Satsuki reacts and moves on, leaving her mother behind. Ragyo smiles back however and vanishes again. Arriving in the command center, Satsuko notices Houka and Iori at the monitor. Ryuko and Nui sit at the table and Tsumugu stands in the background and smokes a cigarette while watching both Life Fiber hybrids. Nui laid down her head on the table and makes her yellow bow, Ryuko looks at Satsuki. She meets up with the other two.

"Hey Satsuki."

"What are they talking about?"

"I don't know, some sort of operation I guess."

"Operation?" Satsuki asks. Tsumugu answers.

"Operation. Just a small group, you three will go. There are riots in Nagoya and other large cities in Japan, it's a good time to hit another strike on Neo-REVOCS and potentially eliminate them. That advertisement center? You visit it, reveal what we got about the corporation and leave without drawing too much attention onto you." Tsumugu explains. Satsuki nods and makes herself a little tea.

"This goes especially for the blonde one." he says and points and Nui. Nui turns around and shows her tongue.

"Blah blah blah, I'll draw as much attention to me as I want to and you can't stop me." Nui smiles. Tsumugu rolls with his eyes and walks away. Iori approaches the three women.

"Well he explained it already, but yes. We could potentially take down Neo-REVOCS by humiliating them. All these evidence we found in the last weeks - the Fiber Factories, the main manufacture, the remains of the headquarter, the evidence Yamamoto brought us, we will use it against them. Houka and me were awake the entire night to work on various, well, "advertisement movies" that show Neo-REVOCS in a whole new light, now all we need are a few people who can publish these movies and the best way to do that is by visiting the heart of Neo-REVOCS' propaganda.

At the moment, Nagoya is more or less under siege. People have lost their patience after Houka and Nonon accidentally destroyed the stadium, on top of all the additional damage we dealt. There won't be too much resistance, however, Houka and me believe the Director will be present, after all, this is his last proper headquarter. If you draw too much attention, as Tsumugu said, you might lure him out of his headquarter and since we know he cannot be killed or even harmed, I advise you three don't provoke him. Sneak in, maybe use the riots as distraction and once you guys have uploaded our presents, you leave again."

While Ryuko and Satsuki listen carefully to what Iori says, Nui ignores everything. Instead, she rather seems to be daydreaming. She even looks up to the ceiling. After a few more minutes, Iori leaves the room with Houka and Tsumugu and the three are left alone. As Nui looks back to her two sisters, they seem to be talking about how to approach the matter.

What did he say again? Advertisement center?

Upload movies?

"Uh, my loves?" Nui asks.

"Hm?"

"Yeah?"

"Question." Nui grins.

"Go ahead." Satsuki answers.

"So I didn't really listen to anything you and Iori said buuuuuuuut I do know we should attack this cool advertisement center and I know there is my dear Doppelgänger so what if we don't just humiliate the former best corporation of all time but also the worst Doppelgänger of all time?"

"Humiliate? And how? Shouldn't we stay a bit more sneaky when we approach this?" Senketsu asks. Nui chuckles about that and whispers into Ryuko's ear. Ryuko raises her eye brows... and then smiles evil.

"... you really are the biggest asshole on this planet."

"What did she had in mind?" Satsuki asks. Ryuko chuckles...

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A few hours later...

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"Leave this city!"

"We don't want you here!"

"There is no place for a corporation like yours in this city anymore!"

Windows break apart and stones fly around, cars hoot and small fires broke out in Nagoya. Angry men and women everywhere. Couturiers and Samurai guard the large facility that is the advertisement center, a large tower like building surrounded by several smaller ones with walls and several foundations, reminding construction wise of an old Japanese castle, but in a larger scale. Civilians try to open up the gates. Next to the walls are streets - and

people block them. No one is getting through the sheer masses of revolting civilians at the moment.

In the middle of these masses, Satsuki walks. Back in Tokyo she used to be more afraid of being among those who hate her, and maybe they still do - the longer she is present on the street, the more people realize who is with them, and the opinions are mixed. Some seem to be hostile towards her, other people trust her, seeing her in her improved Wrath Regalia. Satsuki stays resolved however and approaches the gates, her spear in both hands, and as she arrives at the gate, she rams the spear in front of her onto the ground and looks up to the Couturiers that however do not attack her to avoid an escalation.

"Director Harime!" Satsuki yells angry.

"Where are you?" she asks calm and looks up to the large tower. The Couturiers watch each other and then notify their master via the Dark Halls - and soon after, Ichiro indeed appears on the rooftop of the building, looking down on Satsuki with his burned pink coat. He smiles slightly.

"Look who we have here..." he whispers to himself uppish.

"Face these brave men and women that do not longer accept the presence of you and your henchmen!" Satsuki says. Normally he wouldn't hear her talking, but the Couturiers let him know about what she says. While Ichiro talks around, Satsuki looks to her left, seeing Nui and Ryuko carefully walking on the rooftops on the other side of the street. Nui forms into a paperplane thanks to her Life Fiber abilities, Ryuko shrugs when she sees that and then transforms into liquid Life Fibers. They both fly over to the walls.

"... and at this point I don't really care about my presence on this world. Who do you think you are that you could destroy the headquarters of your own corporation, Kiryuin?!" he reacts. Satsuki closes her eyes for a second and opens them again with a brief smile.

"That's exactly why I can take them down whenever I want to. This corporation belongs to me. It's legacy is mine, with both it's good and bad sides, and soon it will be yours no longer, but in my hands."

"And how do you want to do that?" he asks. Nui and Ryuko knocked out a few Samurai and approach the gates.

"If you do not care about your presence on this world at all, then you won't mind if we come in and visit you." Satsuki says. Ryuko and Nui open the gates by pulling Life Fibers around the wheels that open them, then dragging on them and eventually opening the large steel doors.

With that, the civilians see their chance and attack the front gates of the building. Ichiro notices how Ryuko and Nui look up to him.

"... grrr..." he grumbles and leaves the rooftop.

"So much about being sneaky." Senketsu mumbles surprised. Satsuki calmly walks through the gates as Ryuko, Satsuki as well as the allied civilians around them overrun the Samurai that hesitate to draw their weapons, although the Couturiers don't shy back from using violence, after all, they are Life Fibers in disguise. However, without the help of the Samurai, the Life Fiber Beings, while extremely strong, are just not enough to properly combat the - only with stones and batons armed - civilians. The Couturiers quickly retreat to the walls where they have a better chance of fighting the civilians on the ground. Ryuko and Nui take the civilians distracting them as a chance to quickly eliminate the Couturiers. The plaza inside the walls is full of propaganda posters, statues, even vitrins with clothes and of course monitors that display Neo-REVOCS ads.

It's somewhat ironic to see how a large scale, multinational corporation such as Neo-REVOCS is unable to defend itself in one of it's most important spots, and it shows how reliant the corporation is on Life Fibers. And without the cheap Ashigaru, it becomes even harder to defend various facilities. And one more it's due to Life Fibers that the Life Fibers are losing. Ichiro's deeds are now

backfiring on him and it gives the entire situation an interesting sense of humor.

Satsuki in the meantime arrives in the inner tower, still calm. Inside, a few Samurai notice her. Everyone else there is just a normal employee and therefore unarmed. Satsuki's gaze pierces through the Samurai, they don't even dare to attack her and simply leave space for her to walk around. Ryuko and Nui catch up to her and follow her in the background as Satsuki reaches the reception.

"I want to speak to the Director."

The man at the desk swallows.

"... here you go." he stutters and presses a button that opens up an elevator. A Samurai appears in the elevator, but as he notices the three sisters, he simply runs away.

"NO NOT THESE GUYS AGAIN!" he yells scared. Seems like he met them once already. Satsuki and Ryuko enter the elevator, however, the man quickly closes it again and jails Nui out, then the elevator goes up. Nui turns around and raises her eye brows.

"Really?" she asks and smiles.

Satsuki and Ryuko wait in the meantime, Nui will surely come soon.

"Well this went better than expected." Ryuko smiles.

"At the very least we made an remarkable entrance." Satsuki answers. A few seconds later, the shaft above the elevator opens and the sound of a snake is audible.

"What was that?" Senketsu asks and suddenly, a snake falls into the elevator. It has a yellow bow on its head. That's Nui.

"SssssSSSSsssss..." she makes and transforms into a human again, then makes her bow and smiles.

"What happened?" Ryuko grins.

"Not much, we made a little trade offer, he can live and I can enter the elevator, I'm a business woman, you know?"

"Of course you are." Senketsu chuckles. The elevator continues to go up for a few more seconds, then the door opens and the three sisters find a small, white hall that leads into the studio of the advertisement center, and probably the place where they can publish the movies made by Houka and Iori.

Entering the studio however reveals Ichiro who's been sitting on a red chair, waiting for them eagerly. The studio has a red screen in the background, flowers... it rather looks like a talk show here. He stands up and opens his arms as a way of greeting them.

"Welcome, Matoi, Kiryuin, and Harime." he grins. None of them say a thing.

"So what is it that leads you to me this time? Are you planning on destroying this facility as well? Not that I would care." he chuckles.

"Yo, dude." Ryuko says. Ichiro looks to her.

"You're talking too much." she says and slams her scissor blades against him, which results in him landing in the next wall. Smoke rises up, Ichiro stands up, however, Nui slams the buttstock of her rifle against him and incapacitates him for a brief moment. Satsuki in the meantime notices the computers in the background that can be used to publish all the evil little movies Nudist Beach had in mind. Ryuko and Nui stand in front of the incapacitated psychopath and start smiling evil.

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Ichiro slowly opens his eyes again and looks around. He tries to stand up but apparently is unable to. He looks down onto his body and notices Life Fibers that tied him up.

"What the...?" he mumbles and suddenly, a light turns on and blinds him for a brief moment. Suddenly, a short jingle is audible, Ichiro looks around but no one is here... and then he can hear Nui moderating.

"WEEEEEEEEEEEEEEELCOME, dearest viewer of REVOCS TV and welcome to the last REVOCS Fashion Show EVER! It's been SOOOOO long since I was here last time, what, five or six years?!" Nui chuckles and enters the room from the right, while Ichiro tries to free himself.

"Yes, that's absolutely right, it's me, Nui Harime, I'm still alive, haha! To my left I have the wonderfully annoying Mr. Harime, we ain't relatives by the way, he just took my name, and additionally, I have these two beautiful women with me! Please welcome Miss Satsuki Kiryuin, my favourite human of all time, and Miss Ryuko Matoi, don't mind her black arms, she's kinda doing a cosplay at the moment!" Nui chuckles as Ryuko and Satsuki enter the scene.

"The hell are you doing!?" Ichiro asks annoyed.

"Shush it!" Nui says and throws his bow away.

"Today's Fashion Show will be quite short but very, very explosive, our audience is eagerly awaiting to take action on what I would consider as one of the best events this corporation ever had! The collection I want to present today is based on this "Nudist Beach" organization - between us, these guys are all weirdos because they are naked BUUUUUUUT that's okay because some of these weirdos are alright.

I call this collection the "Humiliating Harime"." Nui smiles - outside the scene, clones throw freshly made clothes towards Ryuko, which she gives to Nui.

These outfits are Nudist Beach uniforms.

"Now, if there are any children watching us, please don't look - or do look, I mean, you guys don't keep on rules anyway, so. Come here, my dear!" Nui laughs and walks in front of Ichiro to change his clothes - the light goes out again.

"No no no no!" he yells, but can't defend himself. Satsuki in the meantime starts some music and turns up the volume, playing "Nowhere To Run" from Martha and the Vandellas, a track from 1965 and rather light hearted.

(AN: How about you listen to said track on YouTube? :) Type down "Nowhere To Run" from Martha and the Vandellas and enjoy the show!)

As the light turns on again, Nui says "Et voilà!" and takes a few steps back, displaying Ichiro in a classic Nudist Beach uniform with a few hearts here and there to show that this uniform was made by Nui.

"Actually I didn't really made that outfit, I just stole one and brought it with me because I figured it would make for a fun little entrance! See, Nudist Beach has very unconventional ways of covering their skin, they basically do not, it's because "uhhh Life Fibers evil blah blah" - I'M LIFE FIBER MYSELF! Look!" Nui says and forms her arm into a needle.

"But who cares?! I still behave like a human, do I? Look how ashamed he is just because he doesn't wear much!"

Ichiro seems annoyed, yet doesn't look up. Nui moves his face up and into the camera. He isn't saying a single thing. His face says enough.

"Now I'm bringing this up because honestly? Some people are okay, I guess. I still don't like y'all, but at least I'm trying. Anyway, enough backstory, SATSUKI! Your turn!" she chuckles and leaves the scene, giving Satsuki the microphone. The light goes out again, and after a

minute of changing outfits, Ichiro appears with a clown nose and bunny ears. It absolutely looks horrible on him. Satsuki investigates it.

"I'm not the kind of person that enjoys stomping on corpses like this man, but this was one of the rare cases where I couldn't say no, and I have to apologize to everyone who thought I died, because I did not - all I'm trying is to make up for what REVOCS did to us and still will do. In the following spots, Ladies and Gentlemen, you'll be able to take a closer look on how Neo-REVOCS works and how the inner processes go - some might be disturbing, others surely enjoyable, proceed on your own caution, since..." and suddenly, someone's trying to kick open the doors. Couturiers appear. Nui laughs and catches the microphone.

"Oh well looks like we have to end our Fashion Show rather soon, thanks for watching, please subscribe to our newsletter under..." and bullets fly, as some of the Samurai that entered the room armed themselves with range weapons.

"AH NEVERMIND, HAVE A GOOD ONE, NAGOYA!" Nui laughs and runs out of the screen. Ryuko waves her hands.

"SEE YA LATER GUYS!" Ryuko says. Satsuki follows Ryuko. The three women leave the tower by jumping out of it. Couturiers enter the room as well and turn off the camera - but then they notice that outside of the facility, a few clones built up additional cameras on the rooftops, showing Nagoya under siege. Ichiro's Life Fiber soldiers notice him. They don't dare to say a single word.

Outside, Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui land on the plaza of Nagoya, where civilians commenced combat against the Samurai. With the help of the three Nudist Beach members, the people of the city are able to take back the control of their home, as Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui easily fight their way through the henchmen of Neo-REVOCS without them being able to properly react since everything goes so fast. Helmets launch into the air, Katana's break apart and ashamed screams of the Samurai are audible as they find themselves back soon enough

with nothing but underwear or even less, if they got attacked by Ryuko.

Mikisugi and the other Nudist Beach members watch the spectacle in the base - he never had a bigger grin.

"Well if that isn't a kick in Neo-REVOCS crown jewels then I don't know what is." he laughs. The men and women celebrate the women's action. Over time, slowly but steady, the people of Japan seek up the next Neo-REVOCS facility to start riots - in Tokyo, people vandalize the corporation's transporters, in the national park, small camp fires are made, fueled by Neo-REVOCS clothes. Samurai are imprisoned by police officers.

In the Matoi mansion, Mako and Mataro watch the livestream.

"Look, that's Ryuko!" Mataro mentions as he sees Ryuko on the street with her other two sisters. Mako seems relieved.

"Ryuko is fine... I'm so glad." she smiles. Maiko bites on gum in the background.

"Man they really do be destroying the entire damn city, you love to see it." she grins. Sukuyo claps with her hands.

"Ohhh, it's so good to see the three of them having fun!" the mother says, while Barazo simply eats croquettes. Guts jumps up and down.

Back in Nagoya, the largest clothing store of Neo-REVOCS is experiencing large amount of visitors and not in the good way - employees panicky run away while Ryuko and her sisters redesign mannequins behind the windows, while in the background, civilians rip apart clothes. Samurai try to catch up with the rioters but are soon defeated, and Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui simply continue their mean little jokes.

On the streets, the first Nudist Beach units appear, ordering civilians certain actions - however, unnecessary bloodshed is to be avoided,

after all, the Samurai are humans too. Satsuki goes back on the street and looks around.

No matter where she looks at, victory is her's. Soon, Neo-REVOCS is giving up - their units cannot fight the thousands of angry civilians, and on the walls of the skyscrapers, she can see the logo of the REVOCS Fashion Show. With this action, Neo-REVOCS reputation is completely destroyed and back on the same level of infamy just like it's predecessor, REVOCS. And with Satsuki appearing back on the screens, it's also most certain she will gain back what once belonged to her. It's likely that, even with all the damage, REVOCS facilities are able to produce a cure in the future. Now all left to do is sending Ichiro back to the place he came from.

Satsuki genuinely smiles seeing all of this.

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Ichiro's Couturiers examine the studio. It got quiet up there in the tower. Some of his loyal henchmen watch the city burn. The psychopath grabs a red coat that hung on the wall, and he's wearing his usual vest and trousers again.

The Couturiers await orders, yet the Director stays quiet. He just walks to the window walls and looks down. In the far distance, a small explosion is visible. On the streets, people bring away Samurai.

No one wants to say anything. Everyone stays quiet for the next few minutes, and all the Life Fibers can do is watching their empire go down. Ichiro closes his eyes briefly and inhales, then exhales from his nose. He barely moves his fingers, covered by red, skin tight gloves, and his bow is gone. One of the Couturiers approach him carefully.

"... what do we do now, master?" the Couturier asks cautious. A second Couturier meets up with them.

"The Entity has left us and we are losing more and more men. Should we retreat?"

"..."

Ichiro looks down to the streets. He can see Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui, if only very tiny. Without doing any mimics, he moves his eyes to the left where one of the Couturiers stands.

"You." Ichiro orders cold. The Couturier takes a few steps forward.

"Follow them. Find out where they hide. Then come back."

"Very well." the Couturier orders and leaves the tower.

"What do we do with our Samurai?" another Couturier asks. Ichiro turns to the side with his head.

"Awaken the Life Fibers in their armor. Gather all men at the Kiryuin manor. Once we know where Nudist Beach hides, they will all die."

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An hour later...

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Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui still support the Nudist Beach units and the civilians in the city. Soon it will be evening. They've met up with the boss of the Naked 24, Arata - it turns out the strip club has been entirely destroyed and not much is left. The group of the three women and additional Nudist Beach soldiers quickly find a little unit of Samurai near the destroyed main manufacture, which they hinder from escaping. While doing so, the Samurai show resistance and are able to land a few hits on the naked soldiers, however, they are still

heavily outnumbered. Not two minutes later, the Samurai give up the battle, and the Nudist Beach men and women tie them up.

While Satsuki speaks with Arata, Ryuko and Nui joke around a bit and leave the group, if only for a few meters and still staying on the street, when all of a sudden, shots are fired. It appears that the Samurai planned an ambush and gave up on purpose. Quickly, the men and women of the organization hide, and even Satsuki has to retreat. Nui catches a bullet, Ryuko liquifies and surprises the remaining Neo-REVOCS units hiding in one of the lower floors of the skyscraper next to them. One by one, Ryuko launches them out of the windows to help Nudist Beach regain control over the battle again. It seems as if there were about six more people hiding. Ryuko eventually jumps out again but notices how Nui grabs one of the Samurai for herself, dragging him into an alley. Satsuki isn't bothered by this, Ryuko however tries to investigate what she is about to do.

In that alley, Ryuko notices Nui is about to kill the scared man who seems to be the one who hit her with the bullet. These weapons belonged to the Ashigaru before, it's likely the Samurai attempted to equip themselves for every possible situation. Nui reloads the weapon and aims on the head with a big smile in her face, until Ryuko touches her shoulder.

"Don't." Ryuko says.

This irritates Nui heavily. Who cares about the life of this guy? It's a Neo-REVOCS soldier. It's just a human. Just one life. The man shakes scared to death.

"Why? He's a human, Ryuko. I hate them. All of them. He even shot me! It's only fair if I shoot back!" she reacts confused. Ryuko just looks into Nui's eyes and slowly shakes her head. She's still holding the finger on the trigger.

"And you are one too... and a Life Fiber." Ryuko comforts and walks forward, carefully holding her hand on the rifle. Slowly, Ryuko moves the weapon down.

"Be better than them. Cause I can agree. A lot of people... are assholes." Ryuko continues and carefully looses Nui's hand from the weapon.

"But you ain't a murderer. Not anymore." she finishes and slowly nods her head. The Samurai stands up and runs away scared. Nui watches how the man escapes. She sighs. Satsuki arrives at the alley entrance. Ryuko turns around.

"We'll meet up with you in a bit, go ahead already." Ryuko mentions. Satsuki nods and goes on.

Senketsu and Ryuko watch Nui slowly putting away the rifle again by shrinking it. Her big sister walks back on the street with Nui, and there, they can see the plaza of the main manufacture, and the Ragyo statue. Nui looks at it.

"Mama would have wanted this." Nui mentions and walks to the statue. Ryuko follows her. As Nui looks up, Ryuko notices she closed her eyes a tad bit.

"Is it raining?" Ryuko asks.

A thunder rings out. Rain is falling everywhere in Nui's mind. It's why she closed her eyes slightly. In Ryuko's vision it's rather clear sky, here and there a few sparkles due to the fires and snow on the streets.

"It's always raining. It never stops." the psychopath answers. No one is around them on the plaza, but a few buildings have little fires coming out of their windows. Broken glass and armor, or damaged cars can be found here.

"Mama probably looks down to me. Like I did something wrong. It's not right, Ryuko. Why can he go away with bad things but I can't?" Nui asks confused.

"I learned you gotta let go of a few things to improve on yourself. I know there's more to you than just a murderer and a mean person. I mean... I saw it and literally felt it. Remember when you tried to cheer up Hoomaru when you were a little child?"

"... yes."

"Mom" never wanted you to be like this because then you wouldn't listen to her. She didn't had any use for a little kid that wants to be happy and friendly to others. None of the things people did to you happened because everyone genuinely hated you. That's all... all on mom. The only person that hated you... was mom."

"How do you want to know that?"

"The way she behaved, the way she spoke with you and everyone else, the things she believed... she treated Satsuki similar to you."

"Then why me? Why me and not Satsuki?"

"Because you worked better than Satsuki and me. In the end, you are more Life Fiber than I could ever be, and the only one who tops you on that is Senketsu - but he's a Kamui and not a hybrid. Ragyo just wanted someone who obeys to her. She just had to manipulate you, make you go insane."

"... I... don't know. Mama... often lied to me... but I still believed her... and she often did bad things to me but I still loved her and I still do. But you and Satsuki hate her... and I don't understand why."

"I don't think you will ever understand. But that's okay. Some things, I believe, you just cannot comprehend. I can't comprehend how Life Fibers in general function, and the dark halls and everything else, while you perfectly understand everything."

Nui nods.

"I just want you to be a better person. Not a good one, I... kinda doubt that will ever happen, although the thought of you making pancakes for everyone and petting little kitties is kinda funny to me... but the best one you can be, because in the end, you, Satsuki and me, we all experienced some heavy stuff." Ryuko continues. Nui shrugs slowly and moves her hair out of her face.

"I mean... I'd do the same like you. If I would have been raised the way you are, I would kill humans too. Or you know... just generally be an asshole. I don't blame you at all. But you know... if I can support you somehow I'll gladly do, cause that's what siblings do in the end."

"... you are way too friendly to me, Ryuko." Nui says rather cold. It seems as if Nui has a hard time comprehending what Ryuko tries to tell her, which was to expect however.

"I just try to see you as what you are - you are my little, psychopathic, evil mean sister that just needs more hugs in her life." Ryuko smiles. Nui chuckles briefly.

"Even then, love... the rain will never stop. Mama did that. Not me. At least I believe so."

"Then I'll be with you. You don't need to be alone. Just like Satsuki and me don't have to be alone. Sooner or later, everything will be okay again. In the end, everything will be okay again at one point. It just takes some time." Ryuko smiles and hugs Nui briefly.

Ryuko is fully soaked.

"Ryuko, if you would see yourself, you'd be ashamed of how soaked you are." Nui chuckles.

"Oh shut it, dude." Ryuko grins.

"Hehe."

"But yeah... try to give the others a chance. Not everyone, of course, but if you see someone that might not be hostile in an instant, maybe you could try to talk with them normally... or at least what is normal to you. Don't think I'll force you to anything, what you do is your choice, but if you struggle, and I know you do, you can always hit me up. In any case, we should head back to Satsuki, I'm kinda down to play a few board games later, you game for that too?" Ryuko asks smiling. Nui rolls with her eyes and smiles.

"Duh. Of course I am."

"Cool." Ryuko chuckles and walks down the street with Nui again. Ragyo's statue looks down to them. On one of the rooftops, a Couturier watches them...

...

In the throne room of the Entity, the singing of the Life Fibers has vanished for the most part. Only a few, melancholic and dark voices are audible. Other than that, only the movements of the inner parts of the Layer are audible, and Life Fibers crawling around. The High Entity stands at the descent to the hungry, blood thirsty Life Fibers - behind it, four additional Entities, including Hinata, evaluate the situation.

"Our enforcer lost his strength." one of the Entities says.

"He does not trust us."

"We should revoke his powers and give them back to ourselves."

"He's not careful." Hinata mentions. The actual High Entity watches the space, and the Earth that is not far away anymore. Japan and Asia is slightly visible now.

"We cannot rely on him any longer. He risks our sovereign existence."

"Shall we eliminate him?"

"... or we test him?"

"Those that follow me are scared. They fear him. He failed in keeping Matoi at our domain."

The High Entity hesitates answering. It seems to be unsure of what to do next? A half minute full of silence passes, in which the other Entities apply the quietness of the situation on themselves. The shining light of the High Entity seems to blur out more and more, and behind these lights, humanoid like appearances are visible, implying the Life Fibers are apparently adapting to the shape of a human body, which would bring up the question whether the Life Fibers want to evolve into actual Life Forms, like Ryuko or Junketsu.

However, the High Entity carefully raises it's arms forward. Out of the walls of the Layer's throne room, a large string of Threads of Fates appear. The Threads slowly hover to the Entity - if you listen closely, you can hear a cruel, possessed melody, sung by Ichiro. It seems that these Threads are somehow connected to him. Could it be that this was his former me, before he became a conscient being?

The High Entity turns to the copies and holds up the orange Life Fibers in the center of the group.

"I sense his actions could cause a risk..." the Entity explains slowly and holds it's white arms above the Fibers. The other Entities copy it's movement - slowly, the Threads of Fate lose their light, and the melodies inside it vanish even further, whileas the singing of the Entities copies goes louder. The threads shrink, until they land in the dull hand of the High Entity. The High Entity drops them gently on the ground - they slowly sink down and disappear in the ground.

Noticable is how the High Entity slowly regains strength and lights, and the Life Fibers in the walls seem to sing more and louder again.

"In the end... our plans need to be... adjusted... his strength is to be ours again. His loyalty... is gone..." the Entity explains. Whatever the Entity did, it must have reduced the powers of the insane psychopath - could it include his actual immortality, too? What does all of this mean? There's no doubt the High Entity is aware, at least partially, of Ichiro's future plans.

"Our plans will change." it continues towards it's copies from which a few dissolve again. Hinata is left and watches how the Entity approaches the descent even further, until the next step would let it fall down into this deep abyss.

"What shall we do?"

"There is no time to properly... examine... Matoi. Kiryuin... will be mine... and the rest... shall be culled."

"Kiryuin?"

The High Entity turns it's head to Hinata.

"Her deeds allow a special... place... which I will gift to her. No more risks."

"And Matoi and Harime...?"

"Shall be destroyed. Either through the hands of the enforcer... or ours... no... or through my hands."

"I will let the enforcer know about this."

"Yes..." it answers. Hinata dissolves, and only the High Entity is left. The Life Fibers in the walls sing Satsuki's name slowly. Finally, the High Entity closes it's eyes.

...

During an inspection in an police station in the inner city of Tokyo, a Samurai is being interrogated.

"Talk. You've been part of this organization and enjoyed a high rank. If you cooperate, the court might show more mercy." the interrogator says. The room is cold and lonely, with nothing but a desk and two chairs. The Samurai isn't saying a single word. He just sits there and watches the man on the other side of the desk.

"I've got plenty of time. I can wait." the man continues. He notices how the fingers of the Samurai move irrationally... as if something would prick him there. Since their faces are covered by masks, you can't even see the eyes of the Samurai. But something feels off.

"Still there?"

No answer. The Samurai sits there and waits. The door behind them opens and two more police officers appear, from which one of them touches the Samurai's head carefully. No reaction.

"That's weird. He's definitely conscious."

"Must be acting."

"Or he has been trained to keep his mou..."

The windows that give insight to the interrogation room turn red - blood everywhere, after an explosion of flesh was audible. Then, nothing but a few blood drops can be heard. And Life Fibers crawling.

Briefly after, a horrible scream and terrifying melody is audible...

...

"Five." Satsuki mentions and jumps with her figurine five steps forward on the board game. They seem to be playing a classic round of Monopoly. And Satsuki happens to draw a Chance card.

"Advance to Illinois Ave." she chuckles evil and moves her figurine to the Illinois Avenue.

"Not the best street, but certainly a decent one. You should visit it sometime, especially you, Senketsu." she mentions. This street belongs to her. Senketsu chuckles. Then, she moves the dice to Ryuko, who throws a three. Hop. Hop. Hop.

"Aw no dude." Ryuko realizes as she has to go to jail. Nui smiles and takes the dice, throwing a four.

"Free parking." she comments and waits patiently for the next turn. It's a rather chill evening after all the trouble today. The three sisters currently play in the halls Nonon's concert will occur tomorrow. Next to the desk is another little table with a few snacks. They chose this hall since it's quiet here and not too far away from the dorms. They've been playing for a few hours already, but it has gotten somewhat late and Nui yawns.

"Wew, I'm tired! I think I'll dip!" she smiles and reaches out her arms, then makes her hair and bow.

"Gonna give up?" Ryuko grins.

"Senketsu is taking away all my money anyway, but tomorrow, this piece of clothing belongs to me." Nui smiles and looks into Senketsu's eye.

"You heard me, sweetheart!?" she grins.

"I am very scared already." he laughs.

"See it this way - the money he takes from you is money I receive, he likes to rest on my streets." Satsuki counters.

"Satsuki, you are my savior! And you, Senketsu! Don't think I gave up - I gave you that victory! Tomorrow you'll find out how great I truly am at board games!" she answers, sips once from her milkshake and turns to the others as she reaches the exit.

"Good night y'all." she smiles, kisses the air and disappears.

"Senketsu, you gotta save me. Satsuki's getting way too rich." Ryuko smiles.

"Indeed she does."

"Ah, I see desperation, that's good." Satsuki grins.

"Not at all, sis, you'd be surprised!"

"By how much money you still have left for me?"

"Oh just you wait." the younger sister reacts and throws the dice, coming out of jail.

"See! This is my first step on conquering all of your properties!" Ryuko says. It's Senketsu's turn - he throws the dice by grabbing it somehow with his sleeve and then carefully dropping it on the table again. A five, but he lands on one of his streets. After a few more turns in which nothing happens, Satsuki lands on a Community Chest card!

"Ah yes, a Community Chest card. Watch this."

Satsuki turns the card.

"You are... assessed... for street repairs.

\$40 per house.

\$115 per hotel. "

Ryuko bites her lips together and clears her throat, Senketsu looks to the ceiling. Satsuki starts counting.

"\$510... ouch." Satsuki mumbles.

"How unlucky." Ryuko grins. Satsuki closes her eyes slightly and looks at Ryuko.

"I agree."

They both look into each others eyes focused, Senketsu looks to Ryuko and Satsuki back and forth.

Then they both start laughing.

"This game sometimes. Why does this always happen to me?!" Satsuki laughs. Ryuko shrugs but feels entertained nonetheless. More time passes, until it's nearly 12 AM. With that, Ryuko decides to go to sleep too now.

"Aight, sis, I'll hit the hay too. Lemme help you clean everything up real quick."

"It's fine, it's not much." Satsuki smiles and stands up. Ryuko still helps putting the game back into the box however.

"Night." Ryuko says and leaves the room.

"Good night, Ryuko." Satsuki answers and continues cleaning up. It's not much anyway, however, it has been a fun evening. Ryuko in the meantime walks over the sleeping Nui that lies on a mattress next to her bed, puts on a pyjama and then goes to sleep as well.

Today was a good day, if one asks Satsuki. It's been a while since you saw her genuinely smiling again. And most importantly: she's just glad Ryuko is well, more or less.

Steps can be heard behind her, the door opens.

Heelclicks.

(AN: Listen to Blumenkranz NzK on YouTube if you'd like to.)

"Mother." Satsuki says without looking to her. Ragyo approaches her until she stands next to her, watching her daughter clean everything up.

"You cannot push me away any further, Satsuki."

Satsuki ignores her words and continues, until the box with board games is filled and the empty snacks put in a little bucket.

"I'm always here, in your mind, in your heart. Even if I am physically absent. You can't leave everything behind... by saying you "graduate", or by using this "cure". All you do is reject the truth and the cruelty of this world even more. Remember?

Diese Welt ist grausam.

One could say I simply... wish to help you."

Satsuki turns off the lights one by one and approaches the exit.

"You cannot run away all the time. At one point, memories will come back... and unless you are prepared, they will devour you. Sometimes, that can be useful, like in my case - it made me stronger, better... immortal." Ragyo smiles.

"Immortal." says Satsuki cold. Well, so much to her idea of becoming immortal. Nothing but a hallucination, not even something real. After leaving the halls, Satsuki... strangely enough finds herself back in the bathing halls of the Kiryuin manor. She's lying in the water, being "purified" by Ragyo - in other words, sexually abused. The hallucination stands next to Satsuki and watches in latent joy.

"Memories of a life you wish to forget. With those memories, those deeds, I raised you, and with those, you have to live - now and always." Ragyo continues and touches Satsuki's short hair. Satsuki bites her teeth together. Seeing this... makes Satsuki feel uncomfortable. It destroys her stance. Her calm, calculating attitude. It's the one thing she does not want to be reminded of. And yet, the hallucination, the Life Fiber Sickness inside Satsuki grows through this fear. It wants Satsuki to think of this.

"And oh... you still remember the feelings. Whenever I felt your body... you cannot deny that it felt good, didn't it? Look... look how you react." Ragyo says as she points out how she carefully touches Satsuki. The older, present Satsuki feels what her younger "me" feels.

"You reject these memories and feelings, but why? Why don't you succumb to them? It would make everything easier. Instead of rejecting it, you could accept it. In the end, I've brought you onto this world to serve me, and serve me you will, one way... or another. A cure for this "Sickness" is counter productive, against everything your ambitions stand for... in the end, I am still not dead, no, I am a prisoner of your mind, and your mind is a prisoner of mine.

"... leave... me." Satsuki threatens and forms her hands into fists.

"None of your actions will change what I did."

"... leave me."

Succumb, child. These feelings define you." Ragyo smiles and walks in front of Satsuki.

"In the end, I win."

"..."

"I always win."

"BE GONE!" Satsuki screams and pushes Ragyo back. Ragyo laughs but isn't pushed down to the ground. The young woman pulls out her spear, enhances it via the infused Life Fibers and rams it into Ragyo's torso, causing her to spit blood, and yet, she still laughs in joy.

"You're never... going to be alone... you love... to hate me. You... still... love me... deep inside you... I can see it." Ragyo smiles and looks into Satsuki's eyes. Satsuki pulls out the spear. Ragyo drops

on her knees and looks up to Satsuki. The water around them turns red.

"And soon... you will embrace this love." Ragyo coughs blood. Satsuki rams the spear directly into Ragyo's mouth, piercing her entire body and then kicking Ragyo onto the ground. She dissolves into thousands of Life Fibers.

"... why me...?" Satsuki mumbles desperate. Ryuko and Nui run through the halls in their pyjamas and pick up the destroyed Satsuki.

"What happened!?" Ryuko asks worried while Nui can only express coldness due to her lack of empathy.

"... Ra... Ragyo, she... she..."

"Hey, shh..."

"... she... she's haunting me more and more and she... she's not going to stop now..."

"What happened?"

"... bathing... halls, she..." Satsuki mumbles scared. Nui understands what Satsuki says and looks to Ryuko with a cold face.

"What does she mean, Nui?" Ryuko asks worried.

"The bathing halls. Satsuki and me both often went into the halls with mama. She touched us..."

"... mom... is evil, Nui." she mumbles and keeps her big sister in her arms. Nui doesn't answer - for Satsuki. She liked it - but then again, she cannot comprehend what happened there, and probably still can't. They both bring Satsuki into her room. Ryuko orders Nui to bring Satsuki a glass of water.

"It's okay." Ryuko whispers and keeps Satsuki warm. Satsuki shivers. You rarely see her like this, if at all. Nui comes back and

puts the water on the desk, then turns her back to Satsuki and pulls out a few Life Fibers out of her fingers. She seems to stitch something together quickly.

When she turns around after a minute, she presents Satsuki two sweet little puppets of Nui and Ryuko, both smiling kindly and with open arms, as if they want to hug Satsuki.

"I... don't really understand what is going on, dear, but... I remember when I felt lonely, I just made myself puppets. Have these two. They will hug you and sleep with you. And they can protect you from evil dreams." Nui says, attempting to cheer up Satsuki. Satsuki looks at the puppets and carefully takes them. She puts them next to her pillow and sighs.

"Try to get some sleep, Satsuki. Tomorrow will be a better day. There's gonna be the concert, and I've asked Mikisugi if we could have a free day. It'll be fun." Ryuko says. Satsuki nods slowly.

"... okay." she answers. Ryuko stands up and walks to the door with Nui. Both say good night. Ryuko walks out first, then Nui, although Nui looks back with her cold face expression.

"Please be safe, Satsuki. Good night, big sister." Nui says and carefully closes the door.

Satsuki sighs and turns her head to the shelf. She quickly changes her clothes to wear a blue pyjama, and then, she slowly lays down onto her bed and hides under the blanket, with only her eyes looking out. They look at the friendly looking puppets.

Strangely enough, even though they were made by an ice cold, nearly heartless person, the puppets give warmth and kindness. Satsuki carefully takes both of them and puts them under the blanket as well, around her shoulders.

They give a feeling of protection. Tomorrow will be a better day.

Everything will be okay...

AN: This took a dark turn near the end. Slowly but steady we are reaching the finale of the story - expect constant battles soon until we reach the final chapter which serves as an epilogue. Ichiro and the High Entity both try to play each other out now, however, Ichiro is now on the hunt and I could imagine he's going to be much more merciless and cruel now. He was like that before already but with this guy, no one knows how heavy everything can get, still. Well... I do know it, and all I know is that the next chapter can be quite... you know what, see for yourself! ^^ As always, leave a review if you like and we'll see us back in Chapter 27!

Cry, For When I Am Truly Gone

AN: This story has a good ending. That's all I can say. Trust me: it'll be okay again. Leave a review if you like, I'd be happy about it. Again though: everything will be okay. Have fun reading, this chapter is as far as I know about 14,5k words long.

Midnight.

Steps are audible. Snow moves through the wind, clouds dark out the sky, and near a hill, the silhouette of a Couturier is visible. Said Couturier slowly walks up the hill. At the horizon, the lights of Ôsaka can be seen - the only view better than Ôsaka is the Nudist Beach HQ, and the large zeppelin on the island. The streets are empty and the HQ itself doesn't have many lights on anymore.

On top of the hill, the Couturier sees his master Ichiro, waiting for him.

"This is the place, Director." the Couturier answers. Ichiro walks a few steps forward. His red, rather dark coat covers him more in the darkness, and it moves with the wind. The psychopathic Director focuses on the zeppelin which is still visible thanks to the lights and the size. There is no smile in Ichiro's face. There is nothing but a gaze that cannot be properly interpreted. Inside the forest, more Couturiers wait eagerly. They slowly move up the hill as well - their robes in dark colors. Some Couturiers do not even wear clothes at all - they appear deformed and destroyed.

"We shall let the Entity know about our status. Even without it's trust, it will still support our cause. Kiryuin is our target, according to Entity Hinata." a Couturier explains. The wind howls. Ichiro doesn't listen. He simply watches the HQ, the zeppelin and the entrance of the base.

Slowly, he forms his hand into a fist...

...

...

...

It's afternoon and snowing slightly. Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui travel through the streets of Ôsaka. There's not much to do today hence why the three decides to kill some time in the local city, and there's plenty of fun things to do. The people of Ôsaka aren't bothered by their presence - one would have expected the contrary, yet here, everyone still is only out for money. Even Satsuki isn't targeted by the citizens, despite her having a rather rich bank account, with and without REVOCS. And today, said bank account will experience heavy casualties. Probably.

On the market place, people sell tasty street food and sweets, boxes with plushies can be visited, there is a shooting range that uses coins instead of little bullets and more. All of this wouldn't be super exciting, after all, you can find such markets in every big city, but what does bring up excitement are the large malls and stores in the city. The tallest of them is build in a creative, yet strange way - a large, tower-like building that lacks proper floors. Some floors consist of nothing but the elevator shafts, the floors above them are held up only by pillars. When Senketsu notices this, he asks Satsuki about this.

"Satsuki? Do you happen to know why they build this strange tower the way it is?"

"... eh, Mr. Takarada did this in an attempt to save money." she answers.

"Huh."

"Welp, that's Ôsaka. Everything's strange here, Senketsu." Ryuko answers.

"And because infrastructure and solid foundations are for losers, I suppose." the big sister continues. Senketsu chuckles. Suddenly, Nui appears from behind with a long list of things to do today.

"Aaaaaalright, my loves! We've got a lot of funny things to do here, so whatcha think of taking a look at this beautiful list I made?!" she asks and shows the list. Senketsu reads out loud.

"Point 1: Eat icecream. Point 2: Annoy humans. Point 3: Buying a red hat for this weird mohawk man. Point 4: Get fun movies in a video library. Point 5: Visit a zoo/aquarium/terrarium/prison to observe the local animals/idiots there. Point 6: Visit the local clothing stores. Point 7: Dine in a restaurant. Point 9: There is no point 8."

"Hihihi."

"Point 10: There is a point 10. Point 11: Annoy more people..." Senketsu continues and still continues, since there are at least fourty points on the list which reaches the ground. Ryuko looks at Nui puzzled.

"We ain't gonna get that done in a day, you know?"

"Ohhh, we will! We all just have to take maximum 10 minutes for each activity, alrighty?"

"You want to eat ice cream in this weather?" Satsuki asks curious.

"Of course! I mean, I don't care about cold weather, so yes!"

"Right." Satsuki answers and looks back at the tower. When Nui looks at it as well, her eyes largen up.

"Hmm... we should take a look at this gloriously ugly building. Seriously, who built this?" she asks and walks towards the tower. Ryuko and Satsuki shrug with their shoulders and follow her.

While walking through the city, they see a group of Samurai being brought into the Naniwa Kinman Highschool by Takarada's men,

although it seems like some of the Samurai have been bribed - some seem to actually work for Takarada now. Ryuko chuckles seeing this.

"Man, they switched sides cause this weirdo offered money."

"You can buy many men, after all." Satsuki answers. Arriving at the place in front of the tower, they can see a large well with a Takarada statue on it. Surreal enough, people swim in it in an attempt to catch the water proof money in it.

Everything's different in Ôsaka. The stairs that lead into the tower are made out of gold, noticable on the shield next to it that says "Yes, this is real gold and no, you can't mine it, otherwise you will be shot with coins.", with the shield pointing via an arrow on the nearby automatic turrets that seem to have ammo made out of large cash bundles. You can only shrug and move on, however, it makes entering the tower much more interesting.

"Man, this city." Ryuko mumbles.

"Are they all this stupid?" Nui asks.

"Nah, they just love money, that's all."

"Pff. Shoulda start loving clothes, then they gonna love my work."

Several floors can be visited with stairs and elevators here, and it seems like there is a fair bunch of people - well visited, but not too much to get lost in the masses. Large TVs hang on the walls and ad for horribly bad looking Takarada goods, and stereotypical mall music can be heard. While walking through the rooms, Satsuki quickly notices a so called "Anti-REVOCS" store, which she looks at in interest. Her sisters move on, Satsuki however decides to take a closer look at the store. Strangely enough, there aren't any windows to look through. Opening the door reveals a different kind of clothing store, whose mannequins wear cloths made out of money... although clothes is a relative term, they look like Nudist Beach uniforms, except without leather and kevlar, but money... yeah.

The gaze annoys Satsuki, and even more is she annoyed when an hyperactive seller runs to her . Said seller, who's wearing a coat out of glued money, screams around and says hello.

"OOOOOH, YOU ARE SATSUKI KIRYUIN, ISN'T THAT SO!?" she yells.

"... where am I?"

"WELCOME TO ANTI-REVOCS! WE AT ANTI-REVOCS SELL NOTHING BUT THE VERY VERY BEST AND MOST EXPENSIVE CLOTHES IN ALL OF ÔSAKA! HOOORAY! TAKE A LOOK AT BE AMAZED!"

"Mind if you scream a little less?"

"BECAUSE MY CLOTHES ARE FULL OF MONEY!"

"Then I suggest you wear different ones."

"HAH, AND WHICH ONES!? REVOCS!? PFF! I'M SURE YOU JUST WANT TO ADVERTISE FOR YOUR STRANGE COMPANY, BUT NOT WITH ME! ONCE MR. TAKARADA FINDS OUT ABOUT ALL OF THIS, HE..."

"Mr. Takarada has exceptionally large respect for me, so much he'd rather avoid having trouble with me." Satsuki answers. A mannequin in the background falls down due to a man accidentally hitting it. The seller quickly runs to the man and yells around. Slowly, Satsuki leaves the store and closes the door. And then, more things fall down. She clears her throat.

"... people sometimes." she comments and meets up with Ryuko and Nui in one of the upper floors, catching them eating soft ice. She takes a closer look at their sweets.

Ryuko has a simple waffle filled with ice and strawberry sauce, Nui has a small cup with ice, small chocolate bits and vanilla sauce.

Satsuki watches them eat their ice.

"Not in the mood for sweets?"

"I'd rather eat ice cream in the summer or after a good dinner."

"Makes sense." Ryuko answers. Senketsu looks around.

"I could imagine there is a store that sells tea, Satsuki..." Senketsu mentions.

"I'm sure there is something like that, yes, but I still have plenty of boxes." she answers and leans back, then takes a look at the clock.

3:29 PM. Around 6 PM, Nonon wants to start her concert in the base. This gives them enough time to spend in Ōsaka.

"Well, the store I just visited was probably one of the more stranger ones here."

"What kinda store?"

"Clothes made out of money."

Nui looks confused to Satsuki.

"Say again?"

"I'm serious, clothes made out of money." she answers. Nui smiles irritated - must be absurd enough to not even drop a joke. Ryuko mentions another thing.

"There's also rumours they have a bank in the city that's robbed every week but no one cares because the stolen money is spent in Ōsaka anyway and at one point brought back into the bank, so they just take it as a more destructive form of taking loans." Ryuko chuckles. Satsuki shakes her head with a slight smile.

"Absurd..."

...

Nonon grins as she takes a look at the halls in which the concert will start soon. Everything was built in a way it reminds of a proper hall - nice walls, proper lights, a large podest on which the instruments stand on, overpasses with several seats for guests and more. Mikisugi looks down at Nonon on one of the overpasses and examines the hall. A few hundreds of people can watch the concert. Some of his men and women are still working on a few more things in the room, such as placing additional seats. Nonon's musician clones care for their instruments in the background. Excited, Nonon walks between the seats and on the ground that is made out of red carpets. Stairs lead up to the podest. The seats are staggered and lead up to the various entrances of the hall. Nonon really wanted a classical concert hall, and it's exactly what she will get.

Even though the overpasses can only be reached via ladders or other rooms, there is plenty of space for her friends. On those overpasses, Ryuko, Satsuki, Nui and her Elite-Four friends will sit there, as well as Iori. Tsumugu and Mikisugi sit down with their men to leave the young adults for themselves. Back at the podest, Nonon turns to the front and looks at her hall. With a bright smile, she rubs her hands and takes a quick look at her uniform - she wears her Valkyrie regalia, which, apart from its abilities, just fits very well for the concert. Most importantly however: she wears a helmet that looks quite similar to the old one from Honnouji Academy.

"Aaaaaah, this concert will be AMAZING! Satsuki will be so happy." Nonon smiles happy. A clone jumps to her from behind.

"Miss Jakuzure, Miss Jakuzure! When do we start the rehearsal?" the one eyed clone asks friendly.

"Fifteen minutes!"

"Uiiii, great, then we still have time to drink a tea?" the clone asks.

"Absolutely! Please, would you bring us some?"

"Very well, Miss Jakuzure!" the clone answers and runs with a few copies to the canteen. Nonon puts her note book on the bracket and turns a few pages. She then puts her conducting stick on it and looks back at her clones that, after a few minutes, come back with a few tasty plates of tea. Nonon and her 32 clones continue to drink before performing their rehearsal...

...

"I mean, in the end you both will wear the clothes I'll stitch for you, simply because you won't need to buy any if you got me... but hey, I'm just trying to, you know, think economical!" Nui smiles and watches how both her big sisters enter a proper clothing store. Several brands and sorts of clothing can be bought - everyday outfits, pyjamas, suits and more. Interested, Satsuki visits the only part that works with her - the suits, while Ryuko takes a closer look at the everyday outfits, and she quickly finds a few good looking jackets with red and black colors.

"They look neat - what do you think, Senketsu?"

"You wouldn't replace me, would you?"

"Oh, haha, of course not. Would you wear one of those though if you'd had the chance?"

"... hmm..."

Satsuki takes one of the suits. It's white and blue, which works well with Satsuki, and it feels soft yet elegant and well produced.

"Simple pattern... not bad." Satsuki mumbles.

Nui in the meantime is bored. The clothes here are garbage compared to original REVOCS clothes, be it a COVERS or a piece that is actually real. Of course - Nui made most of REVOCS' clothes, they have to be good. Staying in this store for more than five minutes feels like eternal boredom, hence why she leaves said store to visit

the video library net to them, which, combined with the dark blue floor and walls, as well as the neon colors, spreads out a decent retro vibe. There's even electro music going on.

Another five minutes pass. Ryuko and Satsuki meet up in the center of the store. Even though Satsuki did like the suit, buying it is not necessary, since she could really just show the piece to Nui and tell her to sew a copy, and knowing her, she would love to stitch something like that together. When the two leave the store, they visit the video library as well to see what Nui is doing.

For some reason, three rows of movies from the categories "Comedies", "Horror" and "Animal Documentaries" are gone. Confused, but with a bad feeling, both sisters take a closer look at the store and then see a trail of DVDs on the ground which reveal a path to the cash register... at which Nui is right now seemingly negotiating .

"... but ALL OF THEM?!" the man asks shocked. Nui smiles perplexed.

"Where's the problem buying 140 movies if I can afford it, my dear?"

"140!? Isn't that a bit much?!"

"Nope." she smiles. Satsuki appears.

"140 movies?"

"Satsuki, I love animals! They are so cute! Especially cats! Or do you mean the horror movies? Okay, yes I admit most of them are 18+ and I am only 17 but can't you do a teeny tiny exception, pleaaaase?" she smiles friendly. Satsuki opens the heart shaped bag Nui has next to her and takes a look - her eyes largen up for a brief moment, and then she sighs.

"... bring them back. We'll take two of those comedies. 16+ maximum!" Satsuki orders, causing Nui to pout.

"Nwaaa... okay! But once I turn 18 next year, Satsuki, haha, you'll see, then you will never be able to stop me! Oh no, I will buy the most brutal, gruesome, sexy and simply horrifying movies of all time and you will watch them with me! Okay, love?" Nui smiles.

"She's serious about that, Satsuki."

"... mhm. Do I have a choice?"

"Well the alternative is me visiting illegal internet platforms oooooorrr I just let my clones get some movies for free if you know what I mean."

"No, we wouldn't do that, would we?" Satsuki answers, grabs two movies and gives them to the man, then she points with her finger at the shelves where Nui got the movies from.

"Now go." she orders.

"Alright, favorite dictator of all time!" Nui chuckles and runs back to place the movies back in order. Satsuki pays them and puts them in a little bag she got, Ryuko smiles

"Ain't gonna get boring here."

"Ôsaka. Full of surprises." Satsuki grumbles and watches how Nui, in a matter of seconds, runs to all sorts of shelves to put the movies back. When she's done, the three leave the video library.

It turns out that a good chunk of the horror movies actually were love movies, which now are at the actual horror section. How evil.

Back outside, Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui visit the car they took to enter Ôsaka. It's on a parking lot a few hundred meters from the market place away. Satsuki enters it as driver, Ryuko sits next to her and Nui in the backseat, reading curiously the DVD descriptions.

"So where to now?" Satsuki asks...

...

Bags full of money are stored in a large chamber inside the large Naniwa Kinman Highschool. Takarada licks his teeth in excitement while the Samurai, who serve as his prisoners and workers, fill up the chamber.

"See all this green stuff!? You could have that too! I'm offering you a good deal, that's all!" he grins satisfied and grabs a list, where he puts a cross on it.

"Ahahah, another thousand bags of money and chamber 109 is full as well!"

"Why would anyone need so much money in the first place!?" a Samurai asks confused.

"Cashing in and out, my man! Cash owns the world and Ôsaka for sure, I'm the prime example and soon, I will own ALL OF JAPAN!"

"... man, at least the Director didn't spoke any trash." another Samurai says.

"Trash!? Who's talking trash? If there is someone talking trash, then it's you!" he laughs mischievous. One of Takarada's men approach him.

"Boss, boss!" the man yells. Takarada throws money into the henchman's direction - he catches the money with his mouth.

"Sit!"

The man sits down and looks up to Takarada while putting the money in his pockets.

"Boss, we just found two dozens of Neo-REVOCS clowns, some of them even accepted our offer, hahaha!" causing him and Takarada to laugh.

"See?! Told ya!"

"Oh yeah, boss? I've heard Mr. Mikisugi and his naked bunch of peeps got Miss Jakuzure for a concert! Why can't we have a concert?! We should PAY her and BRING her to US!"

"CONCERT!?! AND I ONLY HEAR ABOUT THIS NOW?"

"Yup!"

"It's not to believe! Once their concert is done I want her to be here! Then she has to take responsibility for not letting me know! And make a few thousands of the green stuff ready, the next concert will happen HERE!"

"Yes boss! Oh yes, boss?"

"Hm?"

"Can I have a bonus, please?"

"NOOOOOO!" he yells. The man runs away in panic and stumbles upon a bag of money, then tries to stand up and runs up the stairs. The Samurai behind Takarada watch the situation.

"Are you treating all of your men like this?"

"Yes and no!"

...

Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui sit at the coast and watch the ocean while the sun slowly goes down. They are eating small snacks for dinner. Cars can be heard in the distance. A few boats cruise on the ocean.

"The last time we had a proper calm moment was when we went back all the way to Ôsaka." Ryuko mentions.

"But it was fun going from A to B." Nui chuckles.

"It was fine, yes." Satsuki answers.

"We should do that again sometime, if you ask me." Ryuko continues. The ocean is calm.

"So what are you going to do with REVOCS, Satsuki?"

"Well... I suppose once it's mine I shall use what means is left of it and make sure we get a cure produced for the world... and once that is done, I will close REVOCS. For good, this time. No factories, nothing."

"Mhm."

"This corporation exists for too long. And after everything that happened, it has to vanish. It should have been gone a long time ago, and yet I still kept on it... like a memory. But this will be over soon... at least that is what I desire."

..." Satsuki?" Nui asks.

"Hm?"

"Uhm... what do we do when mama's corporation is closed?"

"... I don't know. Perhaps... we open a small store. There's enough money to open one. It won't be enough for a living for all three of us, but together, we might be able to create something nice."

"A fashion store!" Nui smiles happily naive. Satsuki shrugs with her shoulders.

"I don't know. I want to live a normal life and not be bound on Life Fibers, or on duties humanity forced onto me for wearing my mother's name - just to undo what she created."

"Well at least it looks better in other parts of the world, Satsuki. When I woke up this morning I've heard more and more countries in Europe leave the Life Fibers behind after all the bad experiences

with them... sure, here and there they are still used but it seems as if people slowly wake up. Guess that also has to do with the corporations who use them, nowadays, people use more conventional clothes again. So uhm... if it helps, at least we still managed to do something the last weeks, not entirely for ourselves maybe, but for the world." Ryuko smiles.

"Good. That's a small step into absolution." Satsuki answers. Senketsu notices Nui being slightly perplexed. Absolution. Taking down REVOCS. Satsuki's slight negativity. It doesn't make sense to her. Ragyo was good to her... sure, sometimes rather unfriendly and she did some bad stuff, but generally, Nui can't complain.

"Uhm, Satsuki? Why do you even care for the others? Be kind and nice to them but in the end you'll be pushed away. If I were you, I'd ignore them all."

"I do ignore most people. I do not ignore the world however. Due to our family, the world became what it is today. And then, the Life Fiber Sickness, which seems to be a part of the COVERS you and mother made, made everything worse. All I want is to make this world a normal place. Father once told me the world is a strange place... and so did mother. And it's the only point where I agree with her. People want someone they can speak guilty, and since you and mother were gone, I had to take the mask of the one spoken as such. As sinner, I have to find absolution... even though I never did the sin..."

"I didn't even knew COVERS had those extra Fibers that crawl into a human's head. Mama never told me that."

"Did she not? Or did she and, due to your blind madness, you didn't noticed a thing anymore?" Satsuki asks slightly frustrated - something Nui doesn't properly recognize.

"Ohhh, you know I'd notice it if she has something fun in her mind, but a Plan B definitely not, why would she, neither me nor her would have expected two stupid blades destroy everything we made." Nui

smiles. This smile cooks something up in Satsuki. It's as if she doesn't care.

Well, she most likely really doesn't.

"You and your narcissism."

"Hey I'm a lil bit annoyed by everyone and everything except you and Ryuko, I wouldn't mind if people like... uh... well... you know, if people die."

"And you wonder why most people have a hard time trusting you?"

"They just don't understand jokes."

"Jokes?"

Ryuko listens carefully, Senketsu closed his eye slightly.

"Yup."

"You find that funny?"

"Of course, why wouldn't I? Don't you dislike people living in poverty either? Is it their fault they live like that? I mean, for some it is their fault but you can't just judge a book by it's cover. I always appear nice and friendly but if we are honest then I am pretty mean, hehe."

"And because you do not want to change you will never find peace. You'd rather run away or take the easy method instead of doing the contrary - instead of giving humans a slight chance, you'd prefer to annoy them, even wish them death."

"Satsuki." Ryuko says.

"Ryuko, I won't lie to her. I have a hard time trusting her, or even sit next to her. She does not give chances, she does not learn, she doesn't want to do anything. Without any offense or sense for

hostility, but just because she had a bad life it does not justify the deeds she performed and was about to perform."

This makes Nui chuckle.

"Haha, weren't you the one who willingly killed people for their little rebellion?" Nui smiles provokingly.

"Okay, that's enough, damn it. You both did major bullshit. I agree with both of you - Satsuki, you are right, Nui is sick in the head and I doubt someone with conditions like hers can't understand everything, hell, look at her face. She's just smiling because she can't understand what you are trying to say, I can't judge her on the other side either because shit... if you would have seen with your own eyes what she's been through, I can't even blame her for doing bad things." Ryuko continues.

"May be. I am simply frustrated by you and mother and even more how you constantly defend her despite knowing exactly what she did to me, to Ryuko and even to yourself. May be that you are my sister and as such I am seeing you, but I do not have to accept your deeds and how your personality is stringed - and since I do not accept it, I'd rather do only as much as I have to. And only thinking how... how you would voluntarily kill yourself just to kill everyone else or make them slaves of clothing... disgusts me." Satsuki says and stands up.

"I'd kill myself for you too, Satsuki. If I'd know you are about to die, I would do everything to save you, because you are my big sister and I love you for that." Nui answers and stands up as well.

"... just like you did with mother?"

"Just like I did with mama, yes. But you don't understand, you would never understand."

"And have you ever considered asking yourself why I don't understand?"

"Because of how I am."

"And how you treat people."

"You have to live with that, mon cher. Mama teached me this world is evil and you have to be just as evil, I'm not saying literally every human is worthless... I mean I do, but there is worthless and worthless worthless."

Satsuki nods slowly.

"And this is exactly why I don't have a high opinion of you. Because you blindly follow mother... when it was all her fault. Her and her henchmen." Satsuki answers and looks to the ocean.

"Pff, you say that as if you'd know much about me? Not like you were interested in me anyway."

"I don't know much about you. I only know you follow her like a loyal drone and it's..." Satsuki says and hesitates. She isn't even angry at Nui. She's just frustrated to see her second sister so corrupted by her mother. It's likely Satsuki wouldn't use those mean terms, but can you really blame her, considering what happened the last years and especially weeks?

"... it actually saddens me, to be frank." she continues frustrated and bites her inner mouth.

"Guys. Just drop it." Ryuko says and stands up.

"You give Ryuko a second chance but not me..."

"Because you won't change, you just kill and cause trouble. And there is absolutely no reason for that, no matter how bad your experiences with people were. It's why you won't get much sympathy from me. Being mistreated by Ragyo is something I pity for you, since I experienced the same. However, if you take Ragyo's ways of teaching as the reason number 1 for hating humanity and send it to

hell, I am still seeing the same person from five years ago... and I find that even more saddening. Since... since weeks ago, I believed different.

Surely it's my fault as well. But the first step to make it better has to be done by you. And if you don't want to take that step... well.

I should go now. I'm destroying the entire mood again. I'm sorry. It wasn't my intention to be like that again.... I'm just very frustrated." she sighs and walks back to the car.

Satsuki's words are harsh but justified. Some of her words are likely part of her own experiences when she was Student Council President at Honnouji Academy. People who thought different than Satsuki had to be punished - whoever is not on her side, is an enemy. Ryuko processes her words. Somewhere she is still right. Satsuki even admits she does mistakes. It's likely just her way of bringing Nui back on the right path.

"I will go back to the car. I'm sorry, once again. Please just understand I can't really start much with you if you behave like a cold hearted monster. Partially, you can't change it and I am not blaming you for that, you've always been emotionally rather... distanced. But you do know exactly what you are doing... hence why it's all the more important you need to consider how you want to approach humans in the future, if you wish to stay in the civilisation. You will have to adapt... unless you prefer a lonely island, because that is where you will land if you can't adapt. These are not my words - they belong to Mikisugi. It was the most fair idea he came up with for you. Isolation. But no one will ever harm you.

It's up to you." Satsuki says and walks back to the car. Considering her body stance, you can really tell and feel the frustration inside her. Nui sits down and looks back to the ocean.

"Maybe she does hate me?" Nui asks Ryuko.

"I doubt it."

"Why not?"

"Satsuki always is like that when something bothers her a lot. Few years ago I was super stubborn about going back to our home at the Matoi Mansion and it annoyed her too. Yeah, it was mean... but I have to agree with her, kind of."

"I just don't know what to do or how to make it better."

"It sounds pretty cliché like now, but well... what's your heart saying?"

"I don't know, Ryuko. I don't want other people to get away with everything. I want to tease and annoy because people deserve it."

"I get that. You want people to pay and feel how you feel and you do that by, well, pissing them off or hurting them. But out of experience I can only say that the more you do it, the more you get it backfired. It's like a cycle. You punch someone, they punch back, then you, and so on. But to break that cycle, once you have been punched, you don't punch back. You let it be, because you know if you do it too, it will continue, since you feel good about hitting back."

Satsuki didn't mean it that way. Trust me, all her words are harsh and maybe a bit too much at first, but they all are sincere. Take them as they are... even though you don't have to take them 100% for now, no one expects you to behave different all of a sudden. She knows a lot about people and how one can improve as a person... I guess it's why she was so unfriendly, because otherwise, you wouldn't understand it. I remember how she told me when she first met Gamagoori, he was completely destroyed and instead of hugging him and saying "It'll be okay" she used precise and cold words that made him stand up again. Really: she doesn't mean it like that... after all, she wants to try to give you a chance.

There were, and will always be assholes. We both too should try to act less like assholes as well, I still got a buncha stuff to learn. And, well, maybe one day, you can prove to Satsuki and the other idiots

that it doesn't matter who you are. If you really can't change and you are the biggest asshole on earth, it is what it is. But if your actions prove a different picture of you, everyone will know you still have a good heart.

Well, I know exactly you do. I was you, after all." Ryuko smiles.

"... I don't know."

"Heads up, troublemaker. You'll find enough people to piss off if that is what concerns you, and some surely deserve it, ain't saying you shouldn't punch back at all, some people really need a kick in the ass. But the things she said about Ragyo and believes are all true. Don't... hold too much on mom. Mom was an asshole and willingly took your life just to save hers. Shit... I bet she'd kill all of us for Shinra Koketsu. But that was... a long time ago, in a different life, for you."

Nui nods.

"... do you... really think she would be angry at me?"

"I think so, yeah. I was in her memories too, I know how she thinks. Once things go out of control, she has a second plan and that always involves someone else's life. Remember how she handled me because I failed? Or you in that night? She'd throw you away just like everyone else for her own good. And I guess if she would catch one of us alive she'd make us pay for fucking everything up she tried, including you, since I guess it's because Shinra Koketsu failed. That's why this High Entity thingy banished you, right?"

"... yes."

"Yeah. Guess this Entity was some kind of angel of revenge for Ragyo after she was gone."

"Mhm."

"But enough of this depressing talk, we gotta watch a concert, right?"
Ryuko grins. Nui looks up to Ryuko.

"Can we watch one of those movies we bought when we are done?"
Nui asks curious like a little child.

"Haha, yeah sure!"

"OOoooooohhh, yes! Alright, off we go!" Nui chuckles happy and stands up. Both walk to Satsuki who's sitting in the car. Ryuko sits next to her, Nui behind them. They start driving.

"You good, Satsuki?" Ryuko asks.

"Mhm? Yes. I'm fine." she answers calm and continues driving.

...

The sun sunk down. In Tokyo, apart from the trouble in the inner city, not much is going on. A few groups of people are trying to fix the streets in front of the Neo-REVOCS HQ. While the men and women here work, they notice how voices become louder, as people start chattering. Some of the workers look up to the sky.

There seems to be a strange little group of objects hovering in the air. Around them, the sky is read.

"You see that too?" one of the men asks.

"Mhm."

Lightning like movements are visible - it seems to be an incredibly large orb which is connected with smaller ones all around it, and out of those orbs, strings hang out. The men try to contact some of their supervisors, when they hear strange footsteps in the HQ. The next thing they see is how Life Fibers crawl to them and grab them into the HQ, one by one, until the dozen has vanished in less than a minute. A Couturier leaves the HQ - it seems as if he was, with a few

others, hiding in it in an attempt to try and catch more humans. The monster looks up to the orbs.

"It... has arrived... she... has arrived..."

...

Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui returned to the Nudist Beach base an hour ago and now walk, together with Gamagoori, Sanageyama, Houka and Iori to the concert hall. Senketsu and Ryuko notice how Nui walks suspiciously close to Iori.

"Psst, you seeing this?" Senketsu chuckles. Ryuko nods chuckling. It doesn't look like they are in some kind of relation, Nui isn't the kind of person who could do that anyway, but it seems like she does enjoy having him around.

The following rooms are decorated with nice looking colors, flowers and more. Even some of the Nudist Beach soldiers here wear clothes for once.

"They really want us to feel like in a concert hall, huh?" Ryuko mumbles.

"Mhm. It was to expect." Satsuki smiles. Sanageyama looks to the others.

"So uh, anyone knows how long we gonna sit there?"

"I expect about two hours." Houka answers, with Sanageyama nodding. When the group reaches the doors to the concert hall, two soldiers, dressed as servants with black suits, open them.

A few hundreds of visitors sit here on comfortable chairs inside the concert hall, the podest empty yet, apart from the instruments and the note book. Nonon's friends climb up the ladders in the background that lead to the overpasses. Left to Satsuki, Ryuko, Nui and Iori sit. On her right, Houka, Sanageyama and Gamagoori. The

view is good from here and everything looks great with the colors and lights. Mikisugi seems to be speaking with Tsumugu down on the ground. No sign of Nonon yet.

"They did a neat job with the hall here, not gonna lie." Ryuko mentions and chuckles. Senketsu looks up to her.

"Are you visiting concerts often?" he asks curious. Satsuki grins when she hears this.

"Ryuko never visits concerts, she doesn't like them at all."

"Hey there's a first time for everything - maybe I get surprised today."

"I'm sure you will, it's Nonon's concert."

"Aren't they gonna mess up our ears?" she asks curious. Sanageyama leans forward.

"Nah, luckily not, that's why I'm visiting them in the first place."

"Anything else though?" she asks, causing Houka to lean forward as well while he puts up his glasses.

"Don't get a wrong impression. Her concerts are not ear deafening loud but they are loud. I wouldn't blame you for having headphones." he smiles evil.

"And you, Gamagoori?" Ryuko asks. Gamagoori leans forward.

"She was preparing for this for weeks - I want to know how this concert goes." he answers. All three men lean back onto their seats again. Satsuki looks to Ryuko, Nui and Iori.

"... music can have an impact on one's motivation at work, so we should consider placing a radio in the workshops." Iori suggests.

"You could also just threaten people with their lives, their motivation will be incomprehensible!"

"I doubt this will productive but I will note your suggestion."

"Wait, would you really do that?!"

"Better not."

"... okay yeah that's fair, guess people here are stitched different than my dear lil workers back at REVOCS." Nui answers. Satsuki stands up and touches Nui's shoulder from behind, making her stand up. They both walk a few steps back behind them all.

"What's up?" Nui asks.

"... I just wanted to apologize from before. I was quite unfriendly."

"Oh."

"I spoke with Ryuko before and it was... well... I should have stated things different, that's all." Satsuki answers and clears her throat. Nui smiles slightly.

"It's 'kay, Satsuki. Ryuko always tells me I'm being too unfriendly and mean to everyone and that I don't really understand that what I am saying might annoy others. I mean... I do understand it, I think, otherwise I wouldn't say it, but I guess my kind of humor is very... sick." Nui answers.

"I just have a hard time taking you as what you are. It's not your fault. Not entirely. Every time I see you, I see a Life Fiber monster... but if I'd say and take it to the absolute, I'd have to see Ryuko as such as well."

"It's okay, Satsuki, really."

"Alright. Well... then let's go back." Satsuki smiles slightly, and so does Nui. They both take back their seats.

"I mean, we can do this more often." Senketsu says satisfied.

"Yeah right, you wanna consider going on more concerts?"

"Alternatively I'll ask Satsuki if we can visit another Strip club and..."

"You win."

Senketsu laughs, Ryuko blushes. The hall is warm and feels comfortable. After a few minutes, the people become quiet and for a brief moment, you can see a clone lurking out with his head out of the curtain and the podest. The clone waves briefly, shows it's tongue and is then dragged away by it's fellow clones.

Eventually, the lights around the people go out, and a large light is turned on, lighting up the podest. Behind the instruments is the curtain with several openings. Nonon enters the stage from the side - her red suit works really well combined with the lights, as well as her helmet. With a slight grin, she looks around and up to Satsuki.

"Dearest guests, welcome, welcome!

Would you look at this! All those visitors! Who would have thought this base has so people that know a few things about culture - d'accord, I do not need to introduce myself, most of you know me and my local concerts and surely, a few visited them too!

Before we start this concert, I would like to express my gratitude towards the helpful men and women who build up this room over the last weeks! Thank you, and of course, thank you, Mr. Mikisugi and Mr. Kinagase!"

The people clap with their hands.

"Additionally, I would like to say thanks to those who provided instruments for me and my little helpers - the instruments sold here in Ôsaka are of top quality, but extremely expensive. Be assured, the money was well spent! Thank you!"

The visitors clap a second time.

"Lastly, I would like to say thank you to Miss Harime as well, who provided a bunch of her clones for today's event! Her clones will deliver a concert you won't forget so fast! Oh no, blood, sweat, tears and a few ripped Life Fibers, that is what it cost us to stand here with the knowledge we acquired the last weeks!"

The visitors clap one last time. Nonon nods satisfied and prepares her note book.

"Now, I don't want to bore you any further with my words, it's not why you came here in the first place! You came here to listen to classical music and to forget the stressful days here in this base - prepare the stage for "Jakuzure's musical entourage!" she smiles. Her musician clones appear from behind the curtain and grab their instruments. Nonon turns to her clones and starts dirigating. Firstly, they will play the Tritsch-Tratsch-Polka from Johann Strauss.

Interested, Houka and Iori lean forward, Ryuko leans her face on one of her hands, Senketsu watches with a large eye and Satsuki simply closes her eyes and relaxes, listening to the music. Nui bops her head to the left and right slowly. Sanageyama notices how interested the visitors are - it's clear everyone was looking forward to this, and as Mikisugi looks around and eavesdrops, he notices people complimenting Nonon's and her clones music. It's probably since she already has quite the reputation in this part of Japan, so having a local celebrity like her around really lightens up the mood.

This piece from Johann Strauss was made in 1858 and presented for the first time in Russia. Nonon is a big fan of Strauss' work, this was well visible years ago and today again, and generally, there seems to be a genuine interest in Nonon's music.

"Few years ago we had to forcefully listen to this music, now we actually look forward to it." Senketsu chuckles. Ryuko nods.

"Mhm. Lots of things changed in the last years but sitting here, well, I didn't expected that, really."

"Well who knows what's coming?"

"It's definitely more enjoyable than fighting off more of those Samurai."

"You don't like fighting anymore?"

"I guess I just want, just like Satsuki, a normal life. But hey, don't think I'm chickening out. I'm still always down for a good fight."

"Ryuko, the pacifist! Ask Nonon, maybe she lets you use one of the instruments too. Hehe, that would be funny if you ask me." Senketsu chuckles.

"Never. Ever."

Both chuckle quietly. Nui smiles at Ryuko, then looks to Iori and reaches her arm on his left shoulder to tap him there. Iori turns to the left, but no one is there. Confused, he looks to Nui who's simply smiling mischievous while keeping her eyes closed.

"Damn you." Iori chuckles. Nui chuckles as well.

Gamagori in the meantime admires how careful and precise the clones play the music Nonon had in mind for them - it looks and sounds great and can be compared with the presentations of other musical groups. Nonon taught her clones well, but that was to expect from such a competent musician. And it's nice to see her with her helmet too, which makes her look taller than she actually is. Even the monkey head is on top of it again!

Mikisugi speaks with Tsumugu in the meantime.

"She's got talent." he says. Tsumugu nods slowly.

"Practice makes the master."

"Ahh... if only all of our men and women would work as enthusiastically as her and her musicians."

"Most do their job well enough. Those who caused trouble the last weeks are not here, they've been sent outside to guard the base. Then the men there aren't bored and a few still have to take care of our zeppelin."

"True that. Was a good choice." Mikisugi answers. The music continues and both listen concentrated. Tsumugu seems slightly impressed.

"... yeah, it's decent. Although I don't listen to much music."

"You have to listen to more, Tsumugu. It's good for your mind."

"Maybe. She's got my interest, that's all I'm saying."

"Right?" Mikisugi answers smiling. One of his men taps his shoulder. Mikisugi turns around.

"Boss, we've prepared a few gifts for Miss Jakuzure, would you like to accompany us once the concert is over?" a female soldier says.

"Sure, why not? Sounds good, she'll like it."

"Great! Thanks, boss."

The concert continues without any problems...

...

On the islands surface, men and women of Nudist Beach keep their guard up. A few TVs are on the walls - that way, they can still listen to Nonon's music. It's better than nothing. The walls are well guarded, the towers floodlights are on and observe the water and the bridge, the gate near said bridge is closed as well and in the distance, you can see the outskirts of the largest city in the area, Ôsaka.

From the west coast of the island, the water moves - and slowly, it shines orange. Couturiers, Life Fiber Beings, and in the very front, the Director appears out of the water, soaked, yet calm and focused.

There is a forest in front of them that hides their movements. More and more Couturiers appear - it must be several hundreds and surely these are the last units Ichiro has left. They reveal their true identity and leave their masks behind.

At the end of the forest, the walls to the base are located. A few men guard the forest entrance.

"Man... I hate this weather. Snow..."

"Is there any use for snow anyway?"

"I guess? How should I know?"

Steps are audible. The men look down. There is someone at the gate.

"Who's there!?" one of them yells. With the floodlights, they aim at the gate.

It's Ichiro who's looking up to the Nudist Beach soldiers with a cold face expression. When they realize who they just met up with, quiet panic can be felt.

"... oh damn."

"We gotta tell Mikis..." and suddenly, a Life Fiber Needle penetrates the head of the man, and blood covers the snow behind the wall as the man falls into the courtyard. Life Fibers crawl up the walls and take down the remaining soldiers at the west wall, which paves a free way for the Couturiers. The gate opens, Ichiro enters the courtyard, just like his Couturiers that wear nothing but their robes. While he and his men take a closer look at the base, Life Fiber Beings attack the men on the walls and quietly eliminate them. The sky in the air lightens up red slightly.

...

In the meantime, Nonon's concert is going on for half an hour, and right now, the clones play "Blue Danube" from Johann Strauss. Ryuko looks to Satsuki who's still satisfied with daydreaming while hearing Nonon's music. Sanageyama seems pretty relaxed as well, Gamagoori sits there like a rock and Houka appears as if he would analyze everything Nonon and her clones do. Nui still just bops her head to the left and right slowly.

"It's like they are enchanted." Ryuko chuckles.

"Satsuki's like that the whole time."

"She loves Nonon's concerts after all."

"You think she would wear me?"

"Careful with your words, my friend!"

"Hehehe..."

...

"Hey, one more move and I..."

Blood flies around. Ichiro and his Life Fiber Beings are in the great hall. With a few hand signs, he orders his monstrous men to fortify their positions. He knows from the concert...

...

Mikisugi is talking with Tsumugu, still.

"Didn't thought I could get interested in music again." he chuckles.

"Music is music."

"You think so?"

"Mhm."

"I mean, metal and classical music have some differences... or at least that's what I believe. Heard Nonon is metal fan. Or was it Rock?"

"Her? No..."

"The others told me."

"I doubt it."

...

Ichiro's men find the rooms that lead to the concert hall. A Nudist Beach soldier recognizes Ichiro and tries to escape, however, a Couturier catches him. Ichiro in the meantime finds a room that seemingly leads to the backstage. He opens the door and finds a large hallway that leads to the podium. The psychopath materializes his scythe.

...

Nonon does another little hand sign to signalize her clones should play louder and with even more love, and that, they do - this is the best part of the blue Danube for many, or at least for Nonon. She's incredibly happy to play this composition with her clones.

Then, the doors that lead to the concert hall open up, and Couturiers slowly enter the room, but do not attack any of the visitors. Five different doors - five groups of Couturiers. Mikisugi and Tsumugu look around and notice slowly who just entered the room.

"Oh look Satsuki, did we expected more visitors?" Ryuko asks and wakes up Satsuki. She looks around and then down. Some of the visitors shine orange.

"What do you mean?" she asks. Nui heard and notices the people down there. Her eyes slowly largen up.

"These are no visitors." she realizes and sees how Ichiro appears on the podest after walking through the curtain, which surprises Nonon and her clones.

"Nonon..." Satsuki realizes shocked. Nui pulls out her rifle to try and shoot Ichiro but the moment she would be able to shoot, the people see how Nonon is hit by Ichiro's scythe and launched away from the podest. Blood scatters through the air, the clones immediately stop playing, Nonon lands on the ground with an disgustingly large wound on the ground, and she shivers and stutters... she's not even screaming in pain. The scythe ripped open her body.

"NONON!" Satsuki yells shocked. All visitors stand up - the Couturiers throw away their robes and keep the visitors back on the seat with their Life Fiber arms and weapons. Ichiro looks up to the visitors and finally to Satsuki, Ryuko and Nui. Nonon coughs blood and moans in pain.

"... help... me..." she stutters scared. Satsuki keeps her eyes on her severely hurt friend, and her shocked face turns into pure, murderous hatred. Ryuko carefully grabs her Scissor Blades, Nui aims with her rifle on Ichiro, both wait for Satsuki's orders.

Ichiro looks up to the three sisters.

"This must have been really funny yesterday." he says slow and quiet. Houka quietly moves behind his chair and pulls out his Laptop.

"... keep him busy. I will disable the electronics - we can see the monsters shining, but they can't see us then."

Gamagoori and Sanageyama look worried towards Nonon.

"Kiryuin. Is this a friend of yours?"

Nonon tries to crawl away, yet a Couturier kicks her away. A Nudist Beach soldier tries to help her up, but said Couturier aims his destroyed arm at him, threatening to kill him and Nonon. Carefully,

the soldier sits down again. Some of the Life Fibers hum an uncalm melody.

"This was a mistake." Satsuki threatens.

"I guess, soon I will perform even more. You... Matoi... and this Doppelgänger... you took it one step too far."

"Then let the others go if you have a problem with us!" Ryuko yells.

"... just tell me if I shoot pull the trigger." Nui whispers.

"Stay cool." Ryuko orders her. Suddenly, a Couturier grabs out a random soldier and rams his arms into him, which causes Life Fibers to crawl into the dying soldier. They feast on his blood and slowly suck him out.

"Your friends are dead... nutrition for Life Fibers. And so will you."

"Fuck you." Ryuko reacts. Satsuki looks back at Nonon. Blood flows down the hallway - she can't move anymore.

"... Gamagoori?" Satsuki whispers quiet while Ryuko keeps Ichiro distracted with insults.

"... yes, Lady Satsuki?"

"Whatever happens today... your oath to me..."

"... you..."

"... do not fear what happens to me. Fear, what happens to Nonon. Protect her... no matter how many wounds I have to suffer, and no matter how bad the situation may be... protect her at all cost."

Gamagoori turns his head to Ichiro and then back to Satsuki.

"As you wish."

"... faster..." Houka mumbles stressed. Sweat rolls down his face.

Carefully, Satsuki puts her arm behind her back and pulls out the spear, then increasing it's size. Since the spear is in the shadows, the Couturiers can't see it.

"... then piss off! Satsuki, Nui and me, we'll go with you to this stupid Entity bastard if you leave the others alone! We'll leave our weapons here as well, but if you think you could get us just like that then you're wrong!"

"I am aware, Matoi." Ichiro answers cold and calm. He looks at Mikisugi, Tsumugu and the rest.

"If the three aren't down on the ground in 15 seconds, kill everyone in this room." Ichiro orders his Couturiers. The monsters react with frightening sounds. 24 of them are in this room - they can only be properly defeated by Ryuko, Satsuki, Sanageyama and Gamagoori. Everyone's else weapons can't harm them or only stop their regeneration for a short time. Mikisugi, Tsumugu and Iori are unarmed, Nui's Fiber Rifle needs half a clip to stop regeneration and not strong enough in melee combat and Houka only has his Laptop.

"I'm gonna shoot him if the time runs out." Nui says.

"... keep your weapon ready, we need to distract the Couturiers." Satsuki says.

"Give me your clones." Ryuko says and grabs her hand into Nui's vest, taking out all the remaining clones she has but one or two. The musician clones await orders.

"... h... elp..."

"Ten."

"Faster, Houka." Satsuki orders.

...

"I'm on it."

...

Nonon starts crying. No one can help her. Ichiro rolls with his eyes.

"Kill Jakuzure." he orders to his Couturier who walks towards Nonon.

"Five."

"Do something!"

"Four."

"You ain't gonna get away with this, you clown!"

"Three."

"Houka..."

"Two."

"HOUKA NOW DO SOMETHING!" Satsuki screams.

"Adieu."

The Couturiers raise their arms and start shining, their melodies turn into a hostile, ear deafening choir, the Nudist Beach soldiers stand up and try to attack the Couturiers without any weapons.

"Lights out." Houka says as the lights in the hall go out - the emergency power should go on soon. Everything is dark now. Gamagoori, Ryuko, Satsuki and Sanageyama jump down, Nui shoots Ichiro, yet he avoids the attack and walks a few steps back as a few of the musician clones try to chase him. The others attack the Couturiers, Ryuko additionally throws some of Nui's clones. Quickly, Gamagoori pushes a few of the Couturiers away and catches Nonon just as she was about to be killed.

"I got you."

"... help..."

In the darkness, the Couturiers can't see much, hence why they slowly retreat. Via the overpasses are additional entrances that lead to the dorms, the armory, the main hall and other rooms. Life Fiber shreds hover through the air as Ryuko and the others slowly take down a few of them. Horrible screams end the life of those who were once human - one might say this is absolution or mercy.

The emergency power goes on, the halls light up in a dark red. The room seems to be secured for the moment. Mikisugi and Tsumugu gather their men.

"Matoi, Kiryuin and Sanageyama will advance. Get to the armory, equip yourself and defend the base. The medics immediately aid the wounded and Jakuzure!" Mikisugi orders.

"I need twelve men who can use DTRs, now!" Tsumugu yells. Satsuki runs to Nonon and looks down to her.

"... Sats... uki..."

"... keep fighting, Nonon, you can do this. It'll be okay." Satsuki comforts and observes Nonon's wound. It's a miracle Ichiro didn't get any of her organs - still, the wound is deep enough to kill her if she isn't getting any medical assistance soon. Pure chaos is visible in the room, and when the medics reach Nonon, they need to figure out how to approach her wounds. From her waist up to her right shoulder, her body is ripped open. If you take a very close look, you can even see... well.

Nui also approaches Nonon and lays her weapon down. Ryuko meets up with Gamagoori and Nonon at the podest while the Nudist Beach soldiers move out.

"Keep her in a stable position!" a medic says. Another one pulls out alcohol to disinfect her wounds, Nui pulls out a needle and a few Life Fibers, then pushes the medics away.

"Can you do something?!" Satsuki asks Nui. The medics help the other wounded.

"... mhm." she mumbles very quiet while concentrating on Nonon's wounds. With her fingernails, she cuts off Life Fibers and starts stitching Nonon's wound together. The result is mediocre, but better than anything the medics could have done in such a short time. While still bleeding, it's not as bad as before anymore and certainly gives Nonon more time.

"What are you doing?" Gamagoori asks.

"Sew Life Fibers onto her. They suck up her blood, convert it into energy and a part of this energy is shared with her, this doesn't really heal the wound but it keeps her awake." Nui explains and finishes.

"How long can she stay awake?" Ryuko asks. A medic looks at Nonon while Nui grabs her rifle and walks to the exit to support the other Nudist Beach soldiers.

"A few hours. We can't properly help her without the right equipment - we have to get her to the zeppelin, the medic bay or to Ôsaka."

While Nui leaves the room, Mikisugi comes back, hearing what the man just said.

"They're burning the base down. The zeppelin is still intact but under attack, we gotta get out of here and defend it, now!" Mikisugi explains. The men and women await his and Satsuki's orders. She nods slowly.

"Then... let's take our zeppelin back and escape to Ôsaka. It'll give us a few hours to prepare ourselves." Satsuki answers. The group leaves the concert hall.

Arriving in the main halls, Ryuko and Satsuki find Nui and a few Nudist Beach soldiers holding their positions behind shelves and desks they use as cover. Everywhere in the hall are Life Fibers. The Couturiers made walls out of Life Fibers that protect them from, fire is visible, the alarms are on and smoke rises up. The Life Fibers sing frightening melodies - shots are fired, blades clash, and from the left side of the sisters positions, Sanageyama and Houka fight off the monsters with their regalias. Iori helps Mikisugi and Tsumugu coordinating the soldiers. Tsumugu, in addition to that, fights off incoming attackers with a group of DTRs, including his own. But there is no sign of Ichiro.

(AN: Listen to "Combat In The Ruins" from Darkest Dungeon on YouTube if you like to.)

On the ground are dead Nudist Beach soldiers, and less Couturiers, and if they are on the ground, they will most likely stand up soon.

"There you are!" Nui reacts and counts her ammo.

"With these amounts of enemies, winning the battle would equal a pyrrhic victory - we have to make sure as many of us can retreat to the zeppelin as possible!" Satsuki orders and charges an attack with Ryuko. Both of them distract the Couturiers in the hall - Life Fiber needles fly through the air, Fibers crawl on the ground and corrupt it to make walking on it harder. Ichiro's men are trying everything to kill or wound as many foes as possible.

While Ryuko and Satsuki draw the opponents attention on them, Sanageyama, Houka and Tsumugu pave a way through the Couturiers and meet up with Ryuko and Satsuki. Behind them, a pair of DTRs explode - more casualties. Gamagoori, Nui, Mikisugi and Iori try to advance now. It seems as if the manuver works, thanks to Ryuko and the rest keeping the Couturiers busy. The groups move across the battlefield.

Then, an explosion is audible - the command center and the path to the dormitories has been destroyed. Concrete and stones fall from

the ceilings and bury Couturiers, but also Nudist Beach soldiers... however, the Couturiers regenerate quickly enough. Tsumugus DTR takes damage and starts smoking.

"Ah shit. Keep moving!" Tsumugu yells. Both groups reach the large elevators fast and steady and are able to turn them on in time, however, not all soldiers manage to escape, and those who are left behind are forced to find another way out...

"... damn it." Ryuko realizes as she sees all these helpless men and women trying to follow them. But if they wouldn't have used the elevator now, they might have died. Nui looks confused to Ryuko and then to the soldiers. She also takes another look at the dying Nonon.

Even though her face expresses coldness and apathy, if you take a very close look into Nui's eyes, you can see she wants to avenge what just happened to Nonon. It's as if she can still care somewhere...

"We'll have to get the wounded out of here first. Then, if we find a way, we'll rescue the others." Mikisugi reacts. Satsuki nods and looks up to the gates that lead to the courtyard of the facility.

When the elevators finally arrive, several dozens of soldiers fortify their positions at the gates until Ryuko and the others made a safe path. The Couturiers must have been waiting for them up there. Gamagoori is hit by a needle - he can take the hit since he's wearing his protector regalia, however, getting hit too often is not advised, as the regalia was made for a battle against Ashigaru and Samurai and not Couturiers with Life Fiber powers.

The zeppelin is damaged, but still intact. Focused, the soldiers try to reach it, but to do that, they have to get across the battlefield, and the Couturiers are many and well positioned. However, as Satsuki looks up in the air, she realizes the sky has gotten dark red. There is a red-white shining light behind the clouds. Snow falls, still. Then, all of a sudden, an orange orb breaks the cloud and lands onto the

courtyard, and Life Fibers crawl out of it. Nui looks up to the sky and stands still, knowing exactly who just arrived. Ryuko runs to her sister to get her to move.

"WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING!?"

"... it's... here." Nui says. Ryuko looks up. Slowly, the clouds move away, and a formation of large, primordial Life Fiber like orbs appear, slowly, and one bigger than the other, and in the center is the largest of them - this is the Layer of the High Entity. Like lightnings, the Life Fibers spread across Okishima and the surrounding area and corrupt the ground. Plants die, dirt turns dark red, explodes as animals under it die due to the sheer bloodlust of the aliens that met the planet. Out of the orbs it launches, Life Fiber Beings with clearer humanoid forms appear, or large abominations, which could be attempts of copying other species' appearances, such as a large, hardly to define object that can only be described as "as thin as a needle, but as tall as a building.", without any arms, and eyes everywhere... and this is only one of the many beings the group experiences.

These are the horrors the Life Fibers brought upon, and it is this very moment in which Satsuki realizes that Ragyo would have been just the beginning, and that she was nothing compared to what the young woman is experiencing with her sisters now...

The Life Fibers try to hunt down as many humans as possible. Ryuko is hit by an orb of the Entity and launched towards the zeppelin, however, unable to fight much longer, as the sheer impact force of it drained from her Life Fiber abilities. She still is able to fight off Life Fibers, yet for how long, is a different question.

Sanageyama, Houka, Iori and Satsuki are able to reach the zeppelin in which, luckily, not many Couturiers are stationed. A group of soldiers arrive at the zeppelin and try to start the machines. Since the airship is not prepared, it can't fly for a day or two, but it should be enough to reach Ôsaka.

The Life Fibers melodies grow louder and darker, more horrifying than ever, terror spreads across the battlefield. Slowly, the machines start, and yet, Tsumugu, Gamagoori and Mikisugi are still stuck at the battlefield. Satsuki has to coordinate the men however, and Ryuko can't properly fight. Sanageyama and Houka are trying to fight off the incoming Couturiers and give the retreating soldiers some space to breath. Nui therefore walks out to make another path with a few more soldiers.

There, she can see Ichiro leaving the base and slowly walking towards the zeppelin, aiming his eyes at Mikisugi and the others.

"... I ain't gonna let you do that..." Nui mumbles as she sees her Doppelgänger trying to reach Mikisugi and so, she hastens up in an attempt to save them. Tsumugus DTR is hit and explodes. Tsumugu himself is able to jump out before it explodes, he still however catches a wound. The few DTRs that are still left try to hold off the attackers. Satsuki reaches Ryuko and looks for her, until she sees Nui, Mikisugi and the rest.

"What are they doing!? We can't wait much longer!" Satsuki comments. Slowly, the zeppelin moves up.

"Get out of here, guys!" Mikisugi yells and shoots with a rifle at incoming Life Fibers. Nui escorts Nonon and Gamagoori from the battlefield, but notices how Mikisugi is hit by a Life Fiber needle. He's bleeding from his shoulder and needs medical assistance.

"Mikisugi... oh god!?" Ryuko mumbles scared. Nui fends off additional Life Fibers and manages to get back with Nonon and Gamagoori on the zeppelin. Gamagoori is hit a second time in his leg and almost lets Nonon fall. Instantly, medics arrive and carry her onto the medical station inside the zeppelin.

As the zeppelin goes up, Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui look back at the battlefield. Mikisugi and Tsumugu are still fighting off the Life Fibers with the few men they have. The zeppelin's turrets try to support them, but it's not enough.

Nui looks at Mikisugi and Tsumugu. They won't survive this. She looks at her rifle. There's not much ammo left... maybe three rounds. But staying in this zeppelin... feels wrong.

Nui leaves the zeppelin and jumps down.

"WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING, NUI!?" Ryuko yells desperate. Nui watches how several dozens of Life Fibers try to approach her position.

"YOU CAN'T SAVE THEM ALONE, NUI!" Satsuki continues and grabs her spear in order to support her.

"You gotta try to get her back up, Satsuki!" Ryuko reacts. Satsuki throws her grappling hook at Nui's back and catches her, but Nui cuts it off and falls back on the ground.

"... no..." Ryuko mumbles.

"Go! I'll find a way out of here." Nui says worried to her sisters. An orb hits the zeppelin but ricochets into a wall. Houka appears.

"We gotta close the gates, now." he says.

"BUT NUI, MIKISUGI AND..."

"Either we close them and leave or we will all die." Houka answers cold, if full of regrets.

"NUI!" Ryuko yells. Nui looks up to her big sister.

"I... can't let them die here. I... don't have the heart for that anymore.

They're friends. Even though I despise them."

"Isn't there a helicopter?! Start one of them, now!" Satsuki yells.

"Would take too long!" Sanageyama answers and runs to the bridge of the airship. Ryuko starts crying as she sees Nui trying to

overcome her fear of death to save humans. Not even Satsuki knows what to say.

"Now stop crying. You can cry another time, when I'm truly gone. I ain't gonna die today. And the others won't either." she begs. Ryuko takes a deep breath and closes her eyes... and then, she pulls out the scissor blades. The gates close.

She throws the scissor blades down to Nui.

"... they belong to you as well." Ryuko says. Satsuki grabs her.

"We have to go!" Satsuki says with a hurt heart.

"DON'T DIE, YOU HEAR ME, DON'T..." and as the gates are closed, Ryuko's voice disappears. Nui shrinks her Fiber Rifle. She doesn't have time or enough bullets to defend herself with it.

Mikisugi and Tsumugu try to retreat and head back to the docks. In the sky, a strange large orb appears, about to land on the battlefield. It's far larger than any other, roughly about the size of the primordial Life Fiber.

"TAKE COVER, AIKURO!" Tsumugu yells. Mikisugi and Tsumugu retreat into a bunker with a turret near the coast. Nui notices the orb before she is able to grab the scissor blades. It will destroy the island, that's for sure. The High Entity wants as many humans to die as possible. Only they can be harmed - the Life Fibers don't mind the damage. Ichiro observes it with a cold gaze.

And eventually, the orb hits. A large shock wave hits the island and the surrounding area, trees break, even beyond the island, snow whirls up, smoke rises, out of the orb appears a strange, grey fog. Nui is hit by the shock wave and lands with the scissor blades near a wall. Everything goes dark.

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Mikisugi wakes up. Water breached through the bunker - dead Life Fibers are on it. He's coughing and notices his wound on his shoulder. It's fine, it could have been worse. When he looks around, he can see Tsumugu on the ground. He lost his consciousness. Slowly, Mikisugi crawls out of the ice cold water and back to his friend who's buried below rocks.

He's still alive. Relieved, Mikisugi tries to find an exit. There is a gap on the bunker's roof from which he could escape. When he does, the island is covered with a fog. Climbing over a few rocks to get out, he can see an intact vehicle nearby which he could use to escape with Tsumugu and possible other survivors. The sky is dark - a mix between dark blue and dark red, and the Layer of the High Entity is visible, circling over the island.

"Oh my..." he mumbles and makes his hair. Life Fibers can be heard singing in the background. Carefully, he looks around and sneaks through bushes and behind destroyed walls to avoid being spotted by the monsters. He can hear a soldier scream - yet he can't help. The Nudist Beach leader continues - the primordial Life Fiber like object spawns new monsters, based on what Mikisugi can hear, but it's only an assumption. Due to the fog, it's hardly possible to see anyone. Here and there, small spots are open and allow Mikisugi to look around. Okishima is destroyed in its entirety. The forest is gone, dead people lie in the water, broken towers, fire...

After a few minutes, Mikisugi sees a few soldiers. One of them runs into his direction.

"... no, no, no..." Mikisugi says to himself quiet and tries to find a cover, until he observes how said soldier is hit by a Life Fiber needle in the back. The soldier bleeds out. Life Fibers crawl into his body and collect the blood. The leader climbs up a destroyed tower in an attempt to try to get a better overview, but soon enough, he can feel

Life Fibers on his feet, and then, a Couturier appears and catches him.

The Couturier sings something in an incomprehensible voice and grabs him. Mikisugi tries to fend him off, yet the attempt fails, and he's brought to the orb where several soldiers and Couturiers wait. Four more of his men seem to have been captured.

"Mikisugi!" a soldier says. The Life Fibers sing calm, yet sinister.

"The others got out of here."

"They will save us, right?!"

Mikisugi desires to give a satisfying and hope inducing answer, but he himself does not know what should happen next... he can hear steps in the fog though - this is Ichiro who's leaving the fog. The Director approaches him and his men. The Couturiers disappear therefore and look for more units.

"Worthless rats." Ichiro insults and looks at the soldier on the far left.

"Fuck you!" said soldier says. Ichiro grabs his scythe and rips the man apart. The others don't scream, but they are visibly intimidated. Mikisugi takes a deep breath, closes his eyes, breaths out, and opens his eyes again. The psychopath takes a look to his right.

"Who do you think you are?" Ichiro asks them.

"Your games... I've watched them long enough. I... don't know how... but your friend Matoi forced the Entity to act against me. I never... never thought this would happen." he thinks and breaks another soldiers neck. A sound of bones breaking can be heard. He did it just like that. He didn't even had to put effort into it.

"But you should joy up... since you won't experience the fury of the High Entity... and quite frankly... in that regards, it's much worse

than me." he continues. When he is about to kill the next soldier, Mikisugi stands up.

"And you think we'll kneel before you forever?" Mikisugi asks resolved and looks into Ichiro's eyes. Ichiro turns his head to Mikisugi and walks to him.

"Aikuro Mikisugi, boss of Nudist Beach..."

"... at your service." Mikisugi answers with sarcasm. Ichiro musters him. He's wearing nothing but his belt and boots.

"Where's your friend Kinagase? Is he alive? Or did... the Entity dealt with him?"

Mikisugi doesn't answer.

"Hm. Not like it matters. What should I do with you? Killing you... would be a decent idea... but not in front of a few worthless rats... if I'd kill you, I'd do it in front of your friends. But none are there. So... any ideas?" he asks calm and curious as he walks close enough to Mikisugi until both their noses almost touch each other.

In Ichiro's eyes is emptiness. No pupils or anything, there is absolutely nothing except the eye color.

"Wandering monster. Tell me... how many are just like you?"

"Like me?... barely any. Most of them are simple parasites, without a mind - they feast on the actions of personalities like me, or my Couturiers. Only few really try to develop... they try to understand how the universe functions, how humans function, or different otherworldly species - in the most adventurous ways you could think of.

But making fun about these personalities... personalities like me... even facing them, like you do, that really requires a brave heart." Ichiro answers and keeps his scythe ready, pointing the tip at

Mikisugi's neck, and yet, Mikisugi doesn't show a single sign of fear. The scythe's tip cuts into his neck, but since Ichiro doesn't move the weapon, nothing bad happens, except a very small wound that can be ignored.

"You talk about parasites when you yourself are one. Only very few are not like that."

"Like Matoi?"

"Like Matoi."

"... indeed. Or this Kamui. Few share this idea that there can be more... some first have to develop this idea, like the Kamui. Others, like Matoi, are born with the understanding of empathy... and lastly, very few... will never properly learn it. It's strangely fascinating. And yet I don't see any use in feeling anything for others. What's the point of it? It only holds you back." he explains and looks into Mikisugi's eyes. Both stay ice cold and resolve.

"Impressive. You really aren't afraid of me at all. Even if death is one finger push away." Ichiro answers. Mikisugi smiles mischievous.

"But you are a rat too and as such, you should vanish like one. Some things in this world... you simply should not deal with." he threatens and keeps his scythe ready, about to cut through Mikisugi's neck, until he can hear a blade clashing on the ground.

(AN: Listen to the theme of the second sister from Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, if you feel like it. This is going to be harsh. The track should be around 4:23 long.

"... how about you deal with someone on your level then?!" he can hear Nui yell. The monstrous psychopath turns around.

She's carrying the scissor blades with her. They turned yellow - both wear Nui's colors. In her head, an horrible thunderstorm goes on. Above them, where the Layer of the High Entity hovers, lightnings fly

out of it. Barely anything can be seen - anything but Ichiro, who's clearly visible.

"... leave." he orders Mikisugi and the other soldiers who retreat. Ichiro moves his coat behind and turns to Nui.

"I'm not afraid of you..." Nui says and bites her teeth together. A lightning strikes next to her and whirls up rain and snow, and the dirt on the ground.

"You're a crybaby and as such, you'll die." Ichiro reacts.

"You'd have to get me first for that.... fuck you... and fuck the Life Fibers..." she says as she looks directly into the eyes of death.

"Then..." Ichiro answers and keeps his scythe behind his back to go into the combat stance - Nui keeps the scissor blades ready.

"... show me how "great" of a Doppelgänger you really are, dearest Harime... or do you prefer "Matoi" more?"

Another lightning strikes onto the ground. The fog that comes from the orb covers both Doppelgängers. The shimmer of their weapons is well visible however. Nui can, apart from the fire and rain, and the Life Fibers, somewhat hear the steps of the Director - sometimes, they are louder, sometimes, they are more quiet. A tower near the base falls apart and causes more smoke and sounds - in that moment, Nui hears steps and sees the scythe of her Doppelgänger coming closer. Swiftly, Ichiro appears and attacks Nui out of the fog, who's able to avoid the attack.

With the scissor blades in both hands, she's able to land two hits on Ichiro's back which causes a bad wound he's bleeding out of, and yet, he's not impressed at all. He rams his scythe into the ground to rip it open, and this causes Life Fibers to appear out of it and attack Nui. Nui falls back and cuts them away but is unable to catch up with Ichiro - but she does not have to, as Ichiro comes back to attack her, and due to the Life Fibers distraction, Nui can't avoid the attack and

is hit on her upper torso - her heart area sustained a bleeding wound. The psychopath disappears in the fog again.

Nui keeps her wound closed with her hand. It's a lot of blood, but it won't kill her. She can take the damage.

Uncalm, she looks around. A lightning strikes once more, and for a brief moment, she was able to see the silhouette of her Doppelgänger, and so, she observes this direction. Nui notices she has one more clone left, hence why she drops it on the ground and let it roll away. Out of the sky, additional orbs appear, and the Layer itself, the largest orb, slowly hovers down. These orbs corrupt everything around them. At least Nui was able to help Mikisugi and the others escape.

Couturiers walk in the fog and observe Nui, their horrifying eyes are well visible. When she turns around, she can see the Director directly in front of her. He grabs Nui's neck and throws her a few meters away, causing her to land on the ground, but as he tries to hit her with the scythe, Nui dodges with a roll and attacks his leg. However, she can only land a single hit and therefore not properly harm him. Ichiro takes two steps back and drags her with Life Fibers to him. Nui is able to cut them off, yet he still manages to punch her in the face and break her nose. She falls into a pond full of water - in reality, this is simply snow, but her reality is altered. Due to the rain, she can't see much as she tries to stand up. Never has the rain been this worse. It makes sense: she knows she can die in this battle, and no one can save her. Either she wins, or she loses. Nothing in between.

Nui retreats and hides in the fog again.

"Hiding in the fog like a little child?" she can hear Ichiro yell. Nui doesn't answer. She needs to stay calm in this duel. Suddenly, Nui walks into a Couturier who watches her interested - she pushes him away and walks a few steps forward into Ichiro's direction again, but he seems to have disappeared - no, he actually was able to find her with the Couturier, and rips her back open. Nui falls onto the ground,

does a roll and performs an vertical attack with the Scissor Blades, which force Ichiro to stay away from her. Nui stands up, even though her back is severely wounded. Life Fibers inside that wound are ripped apart and desperately try to find a connection inside her again, but they can't anymore. This wound won't regenerate.

"Look at her - the former Grand Couturier of REVOCS, and she's taking hits like the little child she is. All in an attempt to find friends. All in an attempt to be "human". All... in an attempt to save those she would call "friends" the most, despite humans being the monsters who harmed her, and not the Life Fibers. What a change of mind." he provokes Nui and kicks her away. When he tries to hit Nui with the scythe, she barely blocks the attack and even loses one of the blades since the hits on her back and heart area took her power.

"Can't even put up a fight against yourself." he chuckles and attacks once more, yet Nui is able to dodge. Without both scissor blades, she can't take him out. The orb behind them spawns additional Life Fibers and thus, blind Nui, while Ichiro expected this and looked away. Nui can take a few steps back, though. Eventually, she is able to get closer to the lost scissor blade. Her Doppelgänger attacks once more, however, Nui hits him first on his waist area, even though it's a minor hit. It still causes him to stay more careful now. In the thunderstorm and the fog, Ichiro appears even more frightening and monstrous, and only now, she can really see how much blood he has on his body - blood from all the humans he killed in the Nudist Beach base. Red shimmer surround his silhouette.

Followed up by that waist hit, Ichiro throws Life Fibers to the left and right, then liquifies and appears directly in front of Nui. He pushes her with the sharp part of the scythe away and hits her again, dealing an horizontal hit on her torso, around the part where the guts of a human would be. She falls onto the ground.

"... must... feel really bad, if the... High Entity betrays someone, huh?" she chuckles.

"Of course. But unlike you, I can express my gratitude soon. Don't worry. I got you covered. I avenged your arms too, after all."

"Pfft... haha... I saw..." both chuckle.

"... you wanna hear something funny?" Nui asks curious as the rain falls into her face. Ichiro raises his scythe and hesitates briefly as he puts his finger on the sharp end of the weapon.

"I think... the time for jokes is pretty much over, for both of us." he answers and attacks, yet Nui is able to quickly grab the second scissor blade and blocks the attack. Ichiro continues to put pressure on Nui and the scissor blades. The Director stays calm and focused, but looks into her face with a murderous gaze. The scythe comes closer and closer to Nui, and the tip already pierces her upper body - the vest turns red due to the blood she loses, and yet, Nui smiles.

"How long I've been waiting for this..." he smiles sinister. Another lightning strikes next to Nui and Ichiro and whirls up more snow. As the scythe is about to tear Nui apart, she chuckles while coughing blood.

"What's so funny?" he asks curious.

"... you know... my next hit might be my absolute masterpiece... in terms of... stitching." she grins. Suddenly, Nui's last clone who she had hidden in the fog attacks Ichiro from behind with a needle blade. The needle blade pierces Ichiro's body, Nui kicks him away! Ichiro turns around and kills the clone with a round attack, but when he turns around to focus back on Nui, he can see both scissor blades flying into his direction.

Nui hits him with them.

Blood splatters across the snow and dirt - and the sound of ripped apart flesh and cloths is audible. Ichiro stumbles back, loses his scythe and falls onto the ground, with his face onto the snow. Slowly, the badly wounded Nui stands up and walks towards him. The

Couturiers run away in fear, likely due to Nui. True Life Fiber Beings watch the both Doppelgängers. Nui comes closer to her psychopathic Doppelgänger and as he stands up and turns to Nui...

... his left eye is ripped open.

Nui ripped apart his left eye, just like Isshin did back then to her. Regeneration? Impossible.

The High Entity severed his immortal threads and made him a normal Life Fiber. He doesn't put on a mimic however - it's as if he is apathic.

"This... Thread of Fate your Couturier gave me..." she explains and walks towards him as he takes a few steps back. He can't grab his scythe, since it's behind Nui.

"... pretty smart... you wanted to make Ryuko kill me, huh? But you wouldn't came up that I could use that Thread of Fate to speak up with one of the Entities... and guess who took your regeneration abilities... so... merci." Nui smiles.

"... heh... how funny." he answers calm. He doesn't seem to be afraid or angry. Blood leaves his left eye. Ichiro takes more steps back until he stands in front of the orb.

"Can you hear the rain already?" she asks.

"... always did, you sick fuck."

Nui extends the scissor blades.

"Decapitation mode..." she mumbles and raises the blade.

"Yeah... do it. Kill yourself. Just like you did before. You ain't gonna leave your past behind by killing the thing you are supposed to be... I am you! YOU WON'T DO IT!" he smiles evil.

Nui attacks Ichiro.

...

Nui drops the scissor blades.

Blood leaves her belly - white Life Fibers have pierced it. Nui tries to keep her belly intact, but more white Life Fibers break through it - a white shimmer is visible behind her... and as she turns around in disbelief, it's the High Entity that looks down to her.

The High Entity observes Nui as she tries to walk back, with the white, needle like Life Fibers inside her. Ichiro doesn't express any facial movements. He stays calm.

Finally, the High Entity raises it's arms and materializes additional white Life Fibers in the air that attack Nui and cut it into four different pieces.

The result: Nui falls apart, her legs, her right arm, her torso, they all are ripped away. She falls onto the ground. The rain is indescribable heavy now. Nothing is visible, except for the High Entity, Ichiro, and the sky. Ichiro leaves the Entity behind to grab his scythe while the Entity judges it's former strongest tool. Nui desperately tries to catch breath, and tears flow... but she isn't as afraid as one might believe. It's as if she accepts it.

Still, what is left of her, stutters heavily, even her lost body parts still try to find a connection due to the Life Fibers in it. All that is left of her is her shoulder area, a part of her left torso and her head, and some of her hair. Life Fiber Beings approach the High Entity and Nui and pay respect towards their mastermind.

There, Ryuko's sister lies. Bleeding, dying on the ground, full of snow, and surreal enough, with rain falling onto her face. Dirt is all around her. Nothing is visible. Only the Entity. Only the sky.

The Entity looks down to Nui, who looks up to it's former "mother" with tears in her eyes.

"... born as one of us, yet corrupted to become one of them... it pains to see this. Tell us:

... why?" the Entity asks.

"... at... least they... gave me a chance... after all I did to them... after all we did to them... they still... want me there... and I can't just... I can't hate them... it... doesn't, doesn't... work... Iori... No... non, Mikis... ugi... my sisters..." Nui sobs. The Entity nods its head.

"We... understand. Family... is what you were seeking." it answers and raises with Life Fibers the scissor blades into the air.

"A noble... cause. And yet... you will return to the place... you belong to. Back... into the emptiness... into senselessness... into... oblivion."

"... this... ain't the end..." she sobs.

"For you... it truly is." the Entity answers and rams the scissor blades into Nui's heart, destroying it therefore. Nui tries to hold onto life.

The rain is beautiful today.

It's cold. But it always hid the pain.

It was always there for her. Ever since she lost her heart as a little child. But feeling how it's ripped apart, and seeing how her body slowly dissolves... despite her crying... she can't stop smiling.

It's too good to see it's still there and caring for those she loves.

Still. Her body dissolves slowly. First her torso. Then her shoulders... and finally her head.

Nui is dead.

All that is left is the yellow bow Ryuko gave her. It sinks into the snow, next to the bloody scissor blades.

The Entity turns around to the destroyed base and Ichiro, who dematerializes his scythe.

"They retreated and went to Ôsaka. We'll siege the city." Ichiro says. The High Entity does not answer - Ichiro therefore walks pass it and gathers his men in the background.

It shines up once everyone disappeared and only itself is left. A shimmer is visible, and followed up by that, a deformed red Life Fiber arm appears. It seems as if the High Entity adapts to the atmosphere on Earth. Finally, it looks up to the zeppelin of Nudist Beach. When the white Life Fibers on the High Entity crawl back, they reveal a monster that should not be described at all. The thought is too horrible. Too... incomprehensible.

"Soon... you shall be mine." it says...

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(AN: Listen to "Boarding The Train/The Ride Home" from "The Polar Express" on YouTube. Specifically, the part at 7:18. I'm sorry.)

White plains are visible. On the horizon, there are forests. A lake is here, too. And mountains. This is the national park. It's cloudy today.

Nui wakes up. She wears a thick, yellow-pink winter coat, and it's cold. Her hair looks horrible.

But where is she?

This can't be the absolute emptiness. If it would be, there truly would be nothing.

Footsteps are on the ground. Someone else must have been here once. Nui follows the path through the white area. In the distance seems to be a cozy looking hut near a cliff, next to the lake. As surreal as everything seems to be - it is a beautiful place. And so calm. And the snowfall feels so idyllic... so harmonic. Everything feels so harmonic and good here. Even a bird can be heard chirping.

And yet she still feels cold - it's strange, she shouldn't feel temperatures at all, or at least not as good as humans. Soon, loneliness spreads out.

Arriving at the hut, Nui notices a pot of tea through the window. Steam leaves it. Someone seems to be here. Nui knocks on the door, but no one opens it. Unsure, the young woman looks around and approaches the cliffs.

There are white Life Fibers inside the lake and in the distance, carefully piercing the water. It looks right, even though they shouldn't be there.

So calm. So idyllic.

Footsteps can be heard on loud wood around the hut.

"Hey, troublemaker." she can hear. Nui turns around.

"... Rei?"

The Things I Did For You 1-3

AN: Welcome back to a new chapter! We have arrived at the final battle chapters! 28 will be a three parter, 29 most likely a two parter! The journey is coming to it's end. Nui is dead, Mikisugi and Tsumugu hopefully alright, but what will Nudist Beach do now? Let's find out what will happen. Enjoy this part! I want to drop the next part as soon as possible, it's the moment I've been waiting for ever since we got the chapter with Ryuko fighting Nui... and I bet it will blow your mind. ;) Alright, have fun! Btw, OneRandomFiber: What track did you listened to, you said something about NieR:Automata! :D I need to play that game again. :D If you have Discord, feel free to add me there: DanieD00#2576. Goes for the other readers too, of course, if you want to get notified about progress!

All sounds have vanished. All fires, all catastrophes... have vanished. Everything has vanished.

Everything, but Ryuko and Nui inside Satsuki's mind. For a brief minute, everything is gone. Everything but those two.

Satsuki sits on the zeppelin's roof and looks down to Japan. Soon, they will reach Ôsaka. Ryuko is somewhere else in the zeppelin at the moment.

Nonon's status is unclear. The medics are doing their best. Iori and Houka examine the countless wounded people.

Satsuki closes her eyes and exhales. She considers herself a big sister - and as a protector of her little ones. And yet, she failed and lost one. Ryuko is left. She can't lose her either. The sheer thought... the gaze enough...

And she can't lose Nonon, or any of her friends.

All sounds have vanished. All fires, all catastrophes... have vanished. Everything has vanished.

Everything, but Satsuki's anxiety of losing the ones she loves. Time to wake up.

"Child." she can hear Ragyo next to her. Satsuki doesn't move her head to her.

"You mourn, even though you should joy up. Joy up - more blood, more casualties, they all feed on your wrath... until it is the only thing that will truly nurture you. And when that happens, you will learn why I took the path I once took when I was a young woman, just like you, and that made me so powerful... even beyond death."

The large Naniwa Kinman High School is visible in the distance. The zeppelin can land on the roof. It would certainly not please Takarada, then again, this would be a minor problem.

"Mhm. Your need of speaking to someone seems to have vanished. How disappointing." Ragyo mentions smiling and walks two steps down inside the small turret room they are in. The hallucination looks up Ôsaka and then back Satsuki - a little chuckle leaves her mouth.

"Well... soon, this desire will reappear. You and me will be reunited after all - one or another way..." Ragyo smiles and touches her hair carefully, and eventually, she disappears. Sanageyama climbs up the turret room and looks up to Satsuki.

"Yo, Satsuki?"

"..."

"Been told that you should visit the bridge in five. Takarada messages us already."

"... soon."

"Aight." he answers and leaves Satsuki again as she sighs.

Back in the throne room, the copies of the High Entity as well as the original watch Ôsaka. Right now, the Entity is still above Okishima. The lord of the Life Fibers does not move at all, it simply watches the progress of it's underlings. One of those copies is Hlnata, who's seemingly... uncalm. It's visible, if only hardly. When looking into his empty eyes, a few Life Fibers move through them, quick and erratic.

"Highness." one of the copies says.

"Observe... the world of a species whose downfall is close... and soon, it shall be ours..."

"You did well on removing the Doppelgänger..."

"And with this deed... we will be closer to Kiryuin..."

"The blood of the Kiryuin is holy... it is to be yours..."

"... yes... ever since..." the Entity answers. It's obsession for the Kiryuin family must have a reason. Is it because the family supported the Life Fibers for decades? After Ragyo, Satsuki must be the next logical step. Does the Entity attempt to corrupt Satsuki, just like it corrupted Ragyo?

In the meantime, the Life Fibers march towards Ôsaka. Ichiro seems to be at the very front of the army. His lost eye seems to cause a certain displeasure among the aliens - do they doubt his powers? His once human henchmen are loyal towards him but then again, they don't have a choice, most likely.

Aside from the regular Life Fiber units that share the same body typus, there are several specimen with them that are much more surreal. Large, clump like Life Fibers with many heads on them, needle thin, up to 20 meter long monsters with equally thin arms that move extremely fast and with a movement that reminds heavily of insects, or little dog like Life Fibers that consist only of heads and legs. All of these things must have been inspired by real specimen the Life Fibers feasted on a long time ago.

"What do we do now, master?" one of the Couturiers ask the wounded psychopath.

"Take down Ôsaka and everyone who lives in it. We deliver Kiryuin, Matoi will be killed, then we deal with the Life Fibers at Honnouji while the Entity is busy with it's two treasures." he answers.

...

As the zeppelin arrives on the roof, the gates of the large airship open up. Several groups of Nudist Beach soldiers move out to fortify positions on the roof while Takaradas men and women are rather confused. Suddenly, the roof doors are kicked open and the boss of Ôsaka approaches the zeppelin with fists and an annoyed face expression.

"WOULD ANYONE CARE TO TELL ME WHY THE HELL THERE IS A ZEPPELIN ON THE ROOF OF MY SCHOOL?!" Takarada screams angry. Houka and Sanageyama catch him.

"Yo dude save your screams for another time, we got a big ass problem coming over here slowly but steady and it's angry as fuck."

"We!? No, no no no no no no, I wanna know..."

"Alright man, we have like one or two hours until an army full of badly mooded Life Fibers arrive at the gates of Ôsaka and until then we should have a plan." Sanageyama reacts and claps on Takaradas shoulder.

"... army full of Life Fibers?" he asks confused.

"You might want to take a look at the zeppelin." Houka mentions and moves on with Sanageyama. Inside the zeppelin, Takarada finds several wounded and especially badly equipped Nudist Beach soldiers, all trying to make the best out of the situation. The strange lover of money enters the bridge of the zeppelin and finds Satsuki and a quiet Ryuko there. Both watch out of one of the windows.

Senketsu has closed his eye partially. Satsuki on the other hand stands near a wall and watches Takarada careful, who approaches her quickly.

"Care to tell me what is going on here?"

"Life Fibers. They came to finish what they started years ago."

"... for real now...?"

"For. Real."

"U..uhm... how about we uh, well, show them what we are made of? I financed a battleship and a zeppelin and I want to see how well they work!"

"Will a zeppelin be enough to destroy this thing in the air?" Satsuki asks with annoyed eyes and points with her finger towards the window, where in the distance, the Layer of the High Entity is visible. Takarada looks out and when he sees it, he raises his eye brows.

"I should have spent more money on shares, I really should have..." he mumbles to himself and turns to Satsuki - Mikisugi, Tsumugu and Nui aren't here.

"And where are the others?" he asks curious, yet Satsuki only shakes her head.

"Great, really wonderful. So we lost two bosses, we lost an entire base, I guess that weird psychopath that always was around you dipped too, and my money's gone as well. Bad day for the conglomerate but eh... alright, doe the weapons deal damage on that big Life Fiber monster in the air?"

"Doubt it. I've been thinking of something but... I have to speak with Ryuko first. She... just needs some time right now." Satsuki answers. Takarada nods.

"Well uh... alright then, I'll be waiting." he answers and leaves the room. Satsuki sighs...

...

A stone falls into the water. Plap.

In the distance, white Life Fibers gently move through the snowy plains, and the sea, and the forests.

Nui sits next to Hoomaru near the cliff. They both just watch the sea. Hoomaru wears a white winter coat.

"Been a little while, hm?" Hoomaru asks with a warm and calming voice. Nui doesn't answer, she just nods slowly.

"You know... this entire area is just a memory. Your memory, might I add. Ever since I'm gone and you inserted that Fiber into my head, I'm here. This orange Fiber... must have somehow connected me with your memory. Now I'm here - in the park. In the nature, where I always wanted to be. The last few years I spent on researching everything." Hoomaru smiles. Nui looks towards her with a confused face - years? But she hasn't aged at all.

"Years?"

"It seems as if time and everything that comes with it doesn't play a role here... or maybe it does? After six years, I stopped counting. There are so many things about the Life Fibers I do not understand."

"What do you mean?"

"Well... everything, I suppose. I think Life Fibers are things can hardly be understood at all. At one point, you just go with it. The only things I think I do understand are two: you, and some of the others are capable of emotions and empathy... and communication.

Interestingly enough, the Entities understand as well. Hinata visited me. You know him, yes?"

"Yes."

"Mhm, figured. Most Entities I met, including the original one, left me alone. Every once in a while, one visited me out of curiosity - maybe three or four. One of them was Hinata, and he also was the first one who spoke to me. He wanted to learn more about humanity, sacrifices and so on. It was fascinating to see what kind of Being he was."

"... and what is so fascinating about them?"

"... well... to be honest, I still don't know. No one really knows, I guess. I think it's the act of self sacrifice? Or the understanding of empathy. Heh, maybe it's trivial stuff like cooking food." Hoomaru chuckles and Nui does the same.

"Right."

"Hinata showed me all sorts of things. The past of other people for example. It was horrifying but somewhat beautiful. I saw my own too. I don't know how this works. Those white Life Fibers... save memories... but how are they saved and how do they get here in the first place?

You see, I've spent a large part of my life here walking through the forests and thinking about the Life Fibers. I was with them after all.

No one really knew how complex they were. How complex you and your alike are. So complex that no one really can understand them. I've analysed so many memories, wrote down so many notes... have a look." she says and gives Nui a note book, which she opens. All pages are full of questions that bring up even more questions, but there are barely any proper answers - and those that are there are rather unsatisfying. It confuses Nui.

"I've heard a few things about you too."

"... oh... did you?" she asks shy. It appears that she lost her memory about how she used to be. It's no surprise, it's been a very long time.

"I've heard you were one of the most powerful Beings the Life Fibers had, maybe the most powerful... whatever that means. Hinata said your inner structure consisted of Entity Fibers. Blood was nearly unnecessary to you. You were simply there. Many others were afraid due to your presence, and it's why at one point, they made a Doppelgänger out of you... well... after Shinra Koketsu, that is."

"... I can't really remember. I don't even know how this "power" would have looked like. Or what I could have started with it. There isn't much to see normally. Dark halls... the Layer... primordial Life Fibers... but nothing more. And yet, I know there was more." she answers and sighs.

"But that is all over now. Everything is over." Nui continues and looks back at the lake.

"Even though I hated all these humans... either because I found them worthless, or because they hurt me... or because mama told me they are evil..." she mentions and briefly looks back to Hoomaru with heavy eyes. "... when I saw them die all around me... it felt like I am doing a mistake. Nonon was nearly dead. Mikisugi... treated me fairly, without much prejudice. And I never stopped being mean to them. But I didn't wanted them to die. Not like this. It wouldn't have been fair.

Have I gotten crazy? What if mama would have found out about this? Do you think she hates me... maybe she saw me somewhere...

... maybe it's better the Entity got me."

"You say things I wouldn't expect from you."

"What you see here is how I am. How I really am. Or what I was supposed to be. I never wanted much. Just a family." Nui sighs and

watches the sky. Some snow falls. She moves her thick boots around on the ground.

"... but I guess that's nothing someone wants. I came because I was supposed to serve the Kiryuins... but I ended up just wanting a home.

I miss mama and my sisters." she says with a heavy heart. Hoomaru notices the contrary in Nui's words though. Right here, and right now, there isn't that evil psychopath, but simply her little girl she had to protect and raise, with a broken heart.

"But it wasn't your fault. It never was. All the hatred on humanity and the evil things you did are all to account to Miss Kiryuin."

"... I... just want to hug mama... or Ryuko... or Satsuki. Maybe I could talk with her... she likes me much more than my sisters. Mama would listen to me. She never hurted me... at least not because she wanted to be mean to me..."

Hoomaru observes Nui. The blonde woman looks to the ground and stays quiet. The difficulty Hoomaru sees is that Nui, despite knowing Ragyo hurt her, she still hangs on her. She still loves her. But did Ragyo ever love her? Likely not. Ragyo only saw a tool in her children - and children is a word you need to take with a grain of salt, as they were most likely not children to her, but creations, or tools, simple weapons.

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"Why were you always so kind to me, Hoomaru?"

"I... know how it's like to be alone. There are so many humans that find themselves back in a similar situation like you. No one wants

them. They feel lonely, they don't have anyone to talk with, or maybe they do but they are too shy, or they think they would annoy them."

"... really?"

"Yes."

"..."

"..."

"Do you still hate them?" Hoomaru asks.

"... I do."

"..."

"... but... I... think they aren't as bad as Life Fibers. They gave me something no one ever really granted me."

"That would be?"

"A home."

Hoomaru smiles hearing that.

"Then they can't be too bad, right?"

Nui nods.

"... I think so." Nui answers careful. Hoomaru chuckles.

"You Life Fibers really are strange friends. Sometimes you contradict each other, sometimes everything makes sense, other times nothing should work and it still does... but I'm not complaining. All of you are so complex in their own way. Billions of Life Fibers, single threads that unite into one single Being that can think and feel. You guys even have an own version of heaven - and I had the luck to land in the heaven of the coolest Life Fiber Being I ever met." she winks.

"I'm not cool."

"But you are tough."

"... why?"

"Well... you stood up to face your biggest fear and... okay, okay, you didn't survive it but... you get what I mean, you faced it nonetheless."

"... I did."

Nui sighs and leans back a little on the log both women sit on.
Hoomaru pats her shoulder.

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(AN: You could listen to "Hirata Estate" from Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice on YouTube for this part, if you want to. ^^)

In the meantime, Ryuko and Satsuki watch the Life Fibers from the tall walls of the Naniwa Kinman High School. The city can't fight off such large amounts of monsters, and even if, there would still be a literal flying fortress that sends out additional monsters until the last human is dead. All they know is that they want Satsuki alive, and likely Ryuko. She still doesn't say much.

"We can't defeat all of these monsters. Neither Ôsaka, nor Nudist Beach. Not even the Japanese Army could... if we had one, that is." Satsuki comments the situation and keeps her hand under her chin.

"..."

"But we can't sit here and do nothing, unless we want thousands of people to die. We can't let that happen."

"... I guess not."

"Do you have ideas? Anything we could do?"

"No."

"We... could... no. Nevermind." she reacts and sighs. If you look closely, you can see some people running on the streets. They panickly try to flee from the monsters that will soon arrive here. A large number of cars leave the city via highways, more trains frequent to the city and in the distance, planes and helicopters fly away.

"Ryuko?" Senketsu asks.

"Hm?"

"I have an idea."

Satsuki listens up as well.

"When we were in Neo-REVOCS... Ichiro spoke about terraforming, you remember?"

"Yeah?"

"If I remember correctly, he and his Couturiers kidnapped thousands of humans to process them into Life Fibers and bring those Life Fibers to Honnouji Academy. If this High Entity is here... it probably wants those Life Fibers for itself to create a weapon? I can't think of anything else he could do with them."

"... could be."

"The arrival of this thing is no coincidence and he spoke about it many times already."

"So what do you want us to do? Go to Honnouji?" Ryuko asks.

"Us? No, we stay."

Satsuki starts thinking - he seems to have a point.

"But the others." she realizes and looks up to her sister.

"We both could distract the Life Fibers and the High Entity. We are the most dangerous opponents it has, and it wants us, not the others. While we defend Ôsaka, Takarada, Sanageyama and the rest could escape with the zeppelin and with vehicles and try to take down the Life Fibers at Honnouji."

"And then what? We'd still have that huge ass Entity thingy above us."

"Yes. But then we would have stopped their plans. Even if we fail, we would make sure the others could weaken the Life Fibers immensely."

"So... you want us to basically kill ourselves?" Ryuko asks.

"... I... don't know. It's not like we have many options. Blades and bullets won't harm this thing. Without scissor blades, you can't cut this thing in half, if that works at all. And I doubt rockets will damage it. If we get captured, we could try to escape and destroy the thing from the inside."

Ryuko thinks briefly and then nods.

"... I guess you are right." she answers.

"Honestly - I don't know if I am or not. Maybe Senketsu and me are totally wrong and we will simply get killed in the process."

"..."

"Ryuko?"

"... why us?" Ryuko asks unsure. The apparent death of Mikisugi, Tsumugu and Nui makes everything harder for her.

"Why does it always come down to us? I'm so sick of it. Sick of Life Fibers and fighting."

"I understand. I feel the same. But we can't give up now. We didn't gave up during the darkest of nights, five years ago, didn't we?

Did we gave up back then?"

"We didn't."

"Exactly. We need to move on. We both will survive. And I hope the others have survived too. Mikisugi and Tsumugu are tough, and Nui? Well... I think at this point, the only person that can kill her is herself. I know she isn't dead. Please, Ryuko. Stay strong."

"... I... I'll try."

"I know." Satsuki answers and hugs Ryuko briefly. Her younger sister stands up and looks back at the Life Fibers once more with her.

"Now come, Ryuko. What is it you always say?

We should kick some Life Fiber asses?" she asks smiling. Ryuko chuckles very briefly.

"After what they did to the others they'll wish it would come down to only that, trust me."

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The first Life Fibers reached Ôsaka. Large, spider like creatures crawl up the rooftops of the outskirts, the tower tall, needle thin Life

Fibers walk graceful, yet strange through the streets, other Life Fibers hunt down humans in the various buildings they can find. Orbs fall from the sky and corrupt Ôsaka's streets. A weird, monotonous hum can be heard from the Layer - it could be that the Layer tries to cause discomfort under the civilians. On the roofs, Takaradas soldiers watch the situation. It may take about an hour until the army reaches the High School.

Alarm sounds ring out in the distance, screams can be heard. Sanageyama and Houka watch how the Life Fibers try to surround large buildings, such as a museum - they then apparently melt into each other and cover the building like clothing the skin of a human. A slow, painful process for everyone inside the building.

...

Ryuko and Satsuki arrive back on the bridge of the zeppelin, where Iori, Takarada and Gamagoori speak with each other. The zeppelin has been fueled up and equipped with weapons and ammo, as the sisters can see via the monitors.

"Satsuki." Iori greets, if uncalm. Takarada waits with closed arms, Gamagoori sits at the side and waits.

"I spoke with Ryuko."

"And?" Takarada asks.

"We have two points to explain:

First of all: the Life Fibers have, according to Senketsu the plan to sacrifice the Life Fibers at Honnouji-Academy to the High Entity. It's why they used the Fiber Factories and their target seems to be to feed the Entity with them - by doing so, it will increase it's power and allow it to likely terraform the planet, and right now we stand in it's way.

Secondly: the High Entity's goal seems to not be the people of Ôsaka, but to capture me and my sisters. The rest of Ôsaka is not interesting to it and I assume it will try to kill everyone that stands in it's way until it got us. The people who die here will die an unnecessary death.

This is why Ryuko and me decided to defend Ôsaka and the school alone as long as possible, while the rest retreats. Unarmed and unexperienced will hide in the nearby cities and forests - those who can fight will enter the zeppelin, arm and prepare themselves to attack the Academy and destroy the stored Life Fibers there, no matter how.

We are both aware that this is a battle we cannot win, but we don't have to. All we have to do is to try and make sure that you all can flee. No one needs to die here because we refuse to leave the school." Satsuki explains calm and resolve. Iori and Gamagoori stay quiet. Especially the latter seems to feel a certain discomfort, but since Satsuki revoked his oath, he is not bound to protect her at all costs - and right now it's possibly Nonon who needs more assistance... Satsuki can defend herself. She knows the Entity wants her - the worst that could happen is that she's getting wounded, but killed? Likely not.

Takarada nods slowly.

"So you seriously want to defend my school alone?"

"Any suggestions to our plan, Takarada?"

"... I do, yes." he grins and starts rubbing his hands evil. One of his teeth shines golden.

...

Humans evacuate from the city. Nudist Beach soldiers enter houses and get civilians out of the city with transporters, or bring them to the

zeppelin at the school. Takarada's soldiers in the meantime begin to place bombs and build up traps.

"If you seriously want to defend my school alone, all right, not my problem, BUT IF I HAVE TO GIVE UP EVERYTHING HERE, then I want the Life Fibers to pay for that! Hehehehe!"

Traps with little money bags and explosives are placed all around the city and on the streets, as well as in little alleys that will, on hit, kill Life Fibers for a short moment. This would cause them to regenerate and for that, they need a moment, which will grant Nudist Beach more time.

"If it's about slamming Life Fiber noses then I'm all in for an well placed investment and my men will make sure everything goes according to plan. The moment they enter the inner city, they'll experience bad surprises that will make the way to the school much harder for them."

Some of the city districts are surrounded by walls - automatic turrets move out of them that are loaded with coins, ready to shoot incoming Life Fibers.

"Turrets, traps, bombs, fire... they'll be surprised. And you will be able to endure against them longer. However - once we left the city with the zeppelin, you should escape as well, if you ask me. Don't put your life at stake for us longer than necessary."

Barricades are placed on the streets, and below them in the canalisation, Takarada's men and Nudist Beach soldiers place additional explosive devices that will destroy the streets and cause the Life Fibers to fall into the ground. After about 20 minutes, a considerable part of Ôsaka is mined with all sorts of evil constructions, ready to greet the Life Fibers.

"Good luck, ladies." Takarada grins...

...

More time has passed. Ôsaka has been surrounded by the Life Fibers, for the most part. The west side of the city is still free and from there on, most refugees leave the city. Here and there, the Entity throws out more Orbs that ravage Ôsaka and spawn new monstrosities. Sanageyama, Houka and Iori help organizing groups that save the citizens. Gamagoori in the meantime stays with Nonon - medics still treat her. The scythe has cut open her entire body, but at least the bleeding has stopped. Nonon herself is awake but can only move her head carefully up or down or to the left and right, while the medics give her medical assistance.

"... where... is... Satsuki...?" she asks painful.

"She stays here. She wants to fight the Life Fibers."

"... but we have to..."

"Satsuki ordered me to protect you. She revoked my oath. Only her and Ryuko will protect the school. We on the other hand have to travel to Honnouji Academy to destroy the Life Fibers there... or at least destroy what they came for."

"... no, I can't leave... her alone, Satsuki, I..."

"Jakuzure - Satsuki will survive. I don't know this night will end but I know she will survive this battle. Just like you."

"... Sats... uki..."

...

With the evacuation going on, Ryuko and Satsuki await the Life Fibers on the walls of the school, near to the gate that would allow entrance to it. Ryuko appears to be unarmed, but her black Fiber Arms can be used as weapons, and they can kill Life Fibers, if not as effective as the scissor blades could. Satsuki keeps her spear ready.

"Look at these monsters."

"They're not all monsters, probably. But most are. Let's make sure we'll catch those who deserve it." Ryuko answers. Satsuki nods.

"This will be a difficult fight, and the Director must be somewhere." Senketsu mentions.

"Probably. This asshole... if he hurt Nui or the others..." Ryuko bites her teeth together and forms needles out of her arms uncontrollably.

"... then he will go to hell for this, Ryuko." Satsuki answers.

"Yeah."

A brief moment of silence appears. The tall tower like Life Fibers climb up roofs and look around.

Ichiro and his Couturiers approach the school from the main street. His units and those behind him need to pass three more districts: the market place which they will arrive at very shortly, the theatre district and finally the financial district - of course the banks are near the school. From there on, they can get access to the school.

When the director reaches the market place with his Couturiers, Ryuko and Satsuki watch him in the far distance. Life Fibers scream or sing horrifying melodies while they march through the city - but when an explosion from the right blows up a large building near Ichiro, one of the larger Life Fiber monsters, a thing with three leg like limbs and heads on the left and right, which is about 6 meter tall, is shred into several little parts. Those parts land, including the debris, on it's allies, burying them.

"Pfft. They prepared Ôsaka with traps..." he mumbles annoyed as he watches one of his tower tall Life Fibers being shred into thousands of parts by a large automatic cannon on a bank. It's needle like arms fidget around, as if an insect would have lost it's limbs and the nerve system is still intact for a few more seconds. The gaze is uncomfortable for most, not for Ichiro however.

In the other districts, more tormented screams of Life Fibers can be heard. When Ichiro and his Couturiers move on to the theatre district, more Life Fibers that act as vanguard are shot by shotguns inside walls that fire coin pellets - scissors and needles are launched out of the ground and cut open or pierce through additional Life Fibers, and one of the needles hit Ichiro's left hand and is stuck inside it. He raises his hand and looks at the needle.

The Life Fibers proceed with more caution as they realize the city is not as safe to approach as they thought, but when the zeppelin starts firing at them as well, the Life Fibers are put in a bad spot. Either they approach fast and uncautious - this would likely cause them to run into more traps - or they stay careful, but then they will be hit by the zeppelin and the turrets all around the city and the bank district.

Ryuko and Satsuki watch how more civilians reach the school behind them and get access to the roof - as well as Samurai of Neo-REVOCS that have been captured. They're brought into safety by Takaradas men. They're humans too, after all, and maybe, some might help in the upcoming battle. Sanageyama escorts them.

The continuous singing of the Life Fibers reveals that they start communicating to develop a plan on how to get access to the bank district as they slowly reach the theatres. Monitors turn on everywhere in the city and the banner of the Takarada conglomerate hoists up on the rooftops of certain large public buildings.

"HAH! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!" Takarada laughs into the monitor. In the background, additional Nudist Beach soldiers, Takarada's soldiers as well as imprisoned Samurai and escaping citizens can be seen.

"Oh no..." Satsuki mumbles annoyed by his voice. Ichiro watches the monitors as his Couturiers move forward. He notices the Samurai with his eye.

"YOU THINK YOU COULD WALK THROUGH **MY CITY** AND TAKE DOWN EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE THAT STANDS IN YOUR PATH WITHOUT SUMMONING THE FURY OF KANEO TAKARADA!? WRONG, YOU IDIOTS, WRONG! OH YOU'LL WISH YOU NEVER ENTERED THIS CITY WITH YOUR... are those feet? Can anyone tell me that?" Takarada asks around. A soldier walks into the camera.

"Yeah could be, some of them have feet from the looks of it." the man answers, Takarada nods understanding.

"Some?"

"Yeah, others don't have any at all."

"Ah, I see." Takarada understands and turns back to the monitor.

"ANYWAY, YOU GET MY POINT! WHAT CAN A BIG, REGENERATIVE BODY DO COMPARED TO THE POWER OF GREEN CASH AND HARD COINS, HUH!?" he yells into the monitor evil. Ichiro sighs and raises his arm while watching the Samurai.

"YOU'LL NEVER GET US AND THE ZEPPELIN IN TIME! NEEEEEEVER!"

The Director forms his hand into a fist, it glows up in red, then, Threads of Fate leave it and all of a sudden, flesh explodes behind Takarada as he screams - he stops immediately and turns around.

"Oh man, what kinda sick crap is that?" he asks worried with the back directed at the camera. One blink of an eye later, the armor of the Samurai implodes, as if the human bodies have disappeared - the armor then breaks apart and reveal embryo like Life Fibers that transform in a matter of seconds into undefinable monsters - some appear more humanoid than others, however. Their red and orange-ish skin lights up, Fibers hang on them, and as they see humans, they slowly try to crawl to them. Briefly after, the connection crashes.

A minute later, shots from the zeppelin are heard, and this causes the Life Fibers to gain more speed again. They conquer the theatre district. Ryuko and Satsuki stay on their positions and wait for a good moment to attack - and that moment seems to come sooner than later when they see how the tower like Life Fibers quickly crawl over the rooftops. And without much time to think, two or three of them start climbing up the walls of the school. For comparison: the walls are about 75 meters tall, with the school having a size of around 175 meters up to the rooftop, as it is one of the larger buildings in Japan. Ryuko jumps down from one of the towers while Satsuki waits on the walls.

The young woman and her Kamui reaches one of those living towers and rams her black arms into it's upper body. It doesn't have any head whatsoever, but when she hits the monster, it seems to be able to control it for a moment by moving her arm into the direction she wants the monster to move to. Although it tries to defend itself, it can't reach her, since Ryuko hangs on it's back. And so, the monster travels back in the direction of it's comrades and starts walking onto them. More Life Fibers appear and try to take down Ryuko. Ichiro notices how Ryuko comes closer to him.

"Kill her." he orders and points with his hand at Ryuko. The Life Fibers watch her - via the rooftops they may catch her, which is why Senketsu keeps looking around to warn Ryuko just in case. When the Life Fibers take more temporary casualties, they attack their own ally instead of Ryuko, to force her to retreat. Briefly before she is able to jump, the monster's legs are cut off by it's friends. Eagerly, they tear apart it's legs until it starts screaming hellish and with an ear deafening bright voice. With that, the 20 meter tall monster slowly falls back onto the ground, destroying several buildings and burying additional Life Fibers. It's arms still fidget around intense. If you hear very closely, it sounds like the living tower screams a painful, sad "Nooooo." as it dies.

Now on the battlefield, Ryuko is hunted by the Life Fibers. They transform into liquid masses as she does and start hunting her on

the rooftops. The turrets aim on the Life Fibers, not on Ryuko however, since Senketsu causes Ryuko's Life Fiber mass to appear black.

The distraction did help keeping the Life Fibers away for a few more moments, however, Ichiro himself and a few of his Couturiers reach the bank district. Satsuki watches how the Layer of the High Entity begins to throw Orbs beyond the school walls, so that the first enemies spawn in the courtyard. On the rooftop of the school, she can see how Sanageyama fights off the former Samurai with Gamagoori and Houka - even though Ichiro had the moment of surprise on his side, the three men do a solid job with additional Nudist Beach soldiers, even though this move from the Director caused casualties under her allies.

While Satsuki climbs down to fight off the incoming Life Fibers in the courtyard, Ryuko moves up the walls and arrives back on one of the towers where she takes a look at the situation. Strange monstrosities that consist only of heads and liquid Life Fiber mass slowly crawl up the walls. A considerable amount of Life Fibers conquer the bank district and it can't be long until they arrived at the school.

However, Nudist Beach still has one more trick left.

"Search the buildings and take down more humans if possible. This city shall burn and be an..." and suddenly, the streets under Ichiro and his Couturiers explode. Debris fall into the air, water pipes leak, fire appears and several dozens of Life Fibers, both small and big, are shredded away. Coins fall on the ground after shredding apart more of the parasitarians. Buildings break apart, and several groups of Life Fibers fall deep into the ground. Even Ichiro needs to take a few steps away - he didn't expect this to happen.

This must have caused the High Entity to rage up, as the Layer starts screaming an horrifying sound while glowing up. Ryuko looks up to the Entity.

"... Kiryyyyy... uuuuuuiiiiiinnnn..." she can hear the apparent living monster the Layer is screaming. Furiously, it seeks to take down Satsuki's bloodline - or maybe worse. Sanageyama calls Ryuko via radio.

"Dude, you sure you wanna do this?! This fucking thing just yelled Satsuki's family name! You really should back out as soon as possible!" Sanageyama yells into the radio and Ryuko does hear that - but she doesn't react to that. More orbs land in the courtyard, others land in the walls and slowly break them apart - in the school, people run for their lives as more Samurai's explode and transform.

Satsuki is forced to slowly retreat - her sister Ryuko jumps down to her and supports her. The turrets on the walls do their part as well, but not for long, as the living towers begin to attack the walls and rip out the turrets. Orbs are launched towards the zeppelin that shoots back at them - it takes several rounds to damage one of them, and this causes the zeppelin to slowly start moving.

Quick, small but flexible Life Fibers that are just as tall as a dog jump on roofs and walls and try to catch the zeppelin, but the attempt fails. More and more Life Fibers reach the school now, and after a few minutes, Ryuko and Satsuki seem to be surrounded and nearly out of chances.

"The roof?!" Ryuko asks.

"The roof!" Satsuki answers and uses the grappling hook on her uniform to retreat to the roof. Ryuko transforms into liquid matter, and again, some of the other Life Fibers do the same. While Satsuki climbs up the walls of the school itself, she watches how the Life Fibers conquered all of the northern and eastern parts of Ôsaka. A red ocean in the streets and alleys ravage everything.

Now on the rooftop, Satsuki rams her spear on the ground when Life Fibers try to grab her. The regalia unloads the energy gathered by Satsuki hitting and damaging the monsters, or by taking hits herself, and like this, the spear causes a small shockwave that slams the Life

Fibers away from the roof. Ryuko catches up with Satsuki and both start to protect each other.

"They really want to kick our asses, huh?" Ryuko notices.

"Yeah, your's more than mine and I don't like that."

"I mean I kinda f'd up on them!"

"Didn't we all?!"

Living towers climb up the roof of the school - Satsuki notices that and tries to cut off the tips temporary. She is able to cut off one of their arm tips, causing it to struggle and eventually fall down, back on the courtyard where several dozens of it's allies are buried. Still, it's not enough to defeat them all.

The rooftop doors are barricaded, so unless the Life Fibers try to slam them open, they need to approach via the the walls. As Satsuki deals with more Life Fibers, Ryuko is hit in the back... but not by any ordinary Life Fiber, but by Ichiro, who got to sneak up to the roof! Seeing that, Satsuki gets worried and tries to support her sister, but the Life Fibers keep Satsuki away from Ryuko. They don't even actively try to hurt her, all they try is to disarm her and wound her slightly, whileas Ryuko is forced to fight as best as possible, since with her, the Life Fibers really seem to try to kill her.

Without Satsuki's support, Ryuko is soon overwhelmed by Ichiro and his underlings, and with his scythe, he hits her torso slightly. She bleeds and lands into a small wall, but at least the wound seems worse than it actually is. It's just very painful. More Life Fibers attack Ryuko, Satsuki's arms are grabbed and the Life Fibers try to force her to go onto her knees. The Director on the other hand rams his scythe repeatedly on Ryuko who tries her very best to fend off his attacks with her black arms, but this is of course much more dangerous, since she doesn't have a proper weapon. Her hands could be cut off, after all. It only takes one bad move.

Ryuko tries to kick away Ichiro, and yet, he was expecting her to act like that, it seems as if he tries to adapt to her style of fighting. Again, Ryuko is hit, Ichiro rips open her arm - black Life Fibers are severed and try to look for a connection. There isn't much blood inside her arm however, but this hit lets Ryuko struggle and fall down onto the ground. Life Fibers keep her down there. Ichiro approaches her and raises his scythe in order to execute her - and suddenly, Satsuki, with fury, rips away the Life Fibers from her and runs towards Ryuko.

"RYUKO!" she screams and tries to sprint towards Ichiro - but the Life Fibers block her way. They want her alive. Satsuki grabs the spear, jumps past the Life Fibers and next to Ryuko. The tip of the scythe is only three centimeters away from Satsuki's face as she looks up protective to Ichiro. The Life Fibers don't move, rather do they watch what the Director does next.

"If you... want to kill her... you'll have to kill me as well." Satsuki threatens, if intimidated. Ichiro looks down to Satsuki - she really kneels in front of him and capitulates. Something she never does. That's how far he got to her now.

There is a certain fear visible in Satsuki's eyes. That gaze bring up a smile in Ichiro's face, while Satsuki looks up into Ichiro's wounded face, noticing his lost eye. Nui must have got him real hard. Ryuko is unable to stand up. The Life Fibers mumble quietly. They want Satsuki alive - they all want that. Ichiro wants to kill them both though, but if he does that, he's probably destroyed by the Entity, and of course, he doesn't want that to happen.

"What are you waiting for?!" Satsuki yells angry. The Director stays calm, but a feeling of annoyance can't be ignored.

Slowly, he moves up the scythe and dematerializes it. When a Life Fiber tries to take Satsuki's weapon, she pushes him away from her.

"I'll keep my weapon!" she orders angry. Ichiro musters Satsuki, both of them watch each other without exchanging any words. There is a deep hate towards each other. Ryuko and Satsuki slowly stand up.

Life Fibers surround them and force them to leave the roof with them. Ichiro waits on the rooftop as his Life Fiber allies leave, until only his Couturiers are left. One of them crawls to him.

"... what do we do now...?"

"We'll use them to distract the Entity - while we follow our own plans."

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The High Entity in the meantime continues to watch the battles from the throne room. Ôsaka is filled with Life Fibers everywhere. Houses break apart and the corruption from the orbs spreads, covering the once concrete and wooden parts of the city into horrible Life Fiber masses. It's underlings look like small ants from this height. Hinata and several other copies watch the ruler of the Life Fibers. Here, in the throne room, they stopped singing entirely. Hinata watches how some of the Entity's Life Fibers fall apart and vanish.

It seems as if the High Entity loses it's life power... or at least, it's power starts to vanish. Hinata notices how two of the copies next to him start dissolving slowly. They don't make any noises or anything. They just look at each other. No mourning, no pain, nothing. It's simple acceptance as their bodies fall apart. When will Hinata be the next? His time is certainly running out. He disappears...

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At the place where Nui and Hoomaru are, it's gotten evening and snow falls from the sky. The white Life Fibers still move in the

distance, and both continue to sit at the cliffs.

"... nights like these aren't unusual here. They all are quiet. Always. I always just sat here and drank a warm cup of chocolate while the chimney was on. But I think that time is over."

"... over? What... do you mean?"

"Well. I think you should go now, Nui."

"But where?" she asks.

"Well, back to where you belong to. To Earth, with your sisters." Hoomaru smiles. Nui seems to be confused and shakes her head.

"That doesn't make any sense, Hoomaru."

"Do Life Fibers make any sense? The surface does... but when you look into them more, they are far too complex to properly understand."

"What?"

"I know the answer to all my questions now, Nui: nothing makes sense. And it all makes sense. The memories, the feelings, the thoughts, the nature of Life Fibers - it all works, even though it should not."

"Maybe. But Hoomaru, I can't go back. And... I think I don't want to go back anymore..." she sighs.

"I understand. You don't want to deal with the pain anymore. You walk on Earth and live with humans and you need to smile and stay friendly when in reality, you just want time for yourself, maybe a few friends, your family and a comfortable home. Instead, you fear, or think that everyone hates you and because of that, you hate back. You kill because you think they will kill you, or hurt you. Isn't it so?"

"..."

"This isn't you." Hoomaru says and stands up to hold Nui's shoulders.

"This is what Ragyo wanted. But the longer you walk with the humans and with Ryuko and Satsuki, the more I got to see after I disappeared, that there still is more in you. Not just a killing machine."

"Stop it, Hoomaru. You know exactly who I am. I can't come back. Not the way I want to. If I go back, I'll be this heartless monster again.

I don't want to be a monster anymore. I just want someone who likes me. But here, I know you like me, and maybe, Ryuko and Satsuki will come sooner or later... I hope later, but... then we could be all together." she smiles naive. Hoomaru shakes her head.

"Life is too short to hope that, Nui. I lived a good part of my life, it wasn't always great, for the most part... but I saw beautiful things. But you didn't yet. There is a reason why you are here..."

"... and that is?" Nui asks.

"Him. He's the reason." Hoomaru smiles and walks a few steps back, then she points with her head towards Nui's back. Nui turns around.

There is a man, and Hinata in the distance. A snow storm comes up. Both of them come closer.

"Who... is that...?"

Hoomaru chuckles.

"That's the man you killed a long time ago. Your father." she smiles. Nui walks a few steps forward and truly sees Soichiro coming closer with Hinata.

Her heart stops working for a moment as she sees her young father approach Nui. No word leaves her mouth as he comes close enough

to her.

Soichiro stands in front of her and looks into her face. Nui doesn't dare to look up. She dares nothing. She just looks to the ground, intimidated. He must hate her. He must! Hinata in the meantime approaches Hoomaru - she seems melancholic.

"... I..." Nui mumbles. Soichiro carefully grabs Nui and hugs her warmly.

"... it's okay." he says calm into her ear and pats her hair. Nui whimpers slightly.

"... I'm sorry."

"I know. You didn't knew it."

"Mama... she... she forced me to, she..."

"You only... wanted to make Lady Ragyo happy. It's okay. I understand." Soichiro says and kneels down to Nui. The little kid in her head wants to stick to her father who however gently pushes her back.

"Papa, I..."

"Yes?"

"... do... you... think I'm a monster...?" she asks cautious. Soichiro chuckles.

"You know... we all are monsters, somewhere. I'm not an exactly good person either." he answers smiling.

"... wh-why..."

"Would you believe me if I say I killed humans too?"

"... you... did?"

"Yes. More than you, if I'm being honest. Although you had the better plan on killing them, that I admit." he says, joking about Nui's and Ragyo's Shinra Koketsu plan years ago to try to lighten up her mood. It might be a dark joke, but dark jokes are what Nui lighten up her mood, and that works indeed.

"... I did my best." she says and kneels onto the ground.

"I know. You always do."

"... can... I stay here... please?" she whimpers more, like a little, sad child that misses it's parents.

"Your time hasn't come yet. I've seen you die two times now... and both times it was too soon. I'm not angry at you... in fact, I'm proud of you... just like I am proud of Ryuko and Satsuki. I promise, little child." he says and kisses her forehead.

"... I... can't go... I'm... well..."

"You're dead, yes. But Life Fibers often find a way back. And Rei knows how. You have a really good friend, you know? And besides..." he says and stands up again.

"Do you really want to leave your sisters alone now for a father you barely know anyway?" he asks smiling.

"... I..."

"You'll know me one day. I'm sure of it. Maybe by reading books... or listening to what your big sister Satsuki says.

I'm sorry for leaving you to Ragyo."

"... papa, please..."

"I promise you, I'll be here whenever you need me. If you need to talk... just start talking. I will always listen. Now... little Nui... you

gotta go. Your sisters need you." he smiles and pats her head once more, very gently, kind and caring.

Hinata walks towards Soichiro and carefully moves him away. He then summons a large Life Fiber with several colors behind the cliff - red, orange, black and white. The scissor blades are visible... and the sky above Okishima. When Nui sees that, she starts to feel uncomfortable, and even more so, when Hoomaru approaches her as Hinata and Soichiro walk a few steps back.

Nui's friend seems to be afraid, but why? Apparently, she holds a large Life Fiber in her hand with the same colors. It seeks to feast on her from the looks of it.

"What... are you doing, Rei?" Nui asks genuinely scared for her friend.

"I know now how your Doppelgänger always comes back when he dies."

Nui shakes her head in disbelief.

"Every time he dies, he comes back into the dark halls and seeks up a Life Fiber Being to feast on it - Hinata can't do that... and your father either... but I can be the Being that you can feast on with this Fiber."

"But that would mean you would vanish entirely! Nothing would be left of you!"

"Vanish? I was never there for anyone, except for Satsuki and for you. Your sisters need you..."

"Hoomaru... if someone has to go, then it's you! Not me! I stay! I don't want to go back! Please! Ryuko and Satsuki... th-they will come here at one point! You..."

"You can't stop me anymore, Nui. When I died, you gave me the biggest gift one could have given me... you fulfilled the wish I always had..." she says and tears up... "... finally in the nature, alone for me, at a beautiful place, where I can do whatever I want to, for years... one week before Christmas... heh, and that week is now. That day is now."

"Hoomaru, stop it!" Nui begs and almost falls from the cliff.

"... you ain't ready to go, I know that you are better than what this bitch Ragyo wanted you to be - I can see it directly in front of me! You prefer to let me go back and it's beautiful to see that because it proves me that you are still my little girl from the forest!" Hoomaru cries sad but full of love and yet aggressive. She keeps the Life Fiber tight in her hand.

"And I want that little girl from the forest to finally have a life with a family that loves her! So please accept my christmas gift, so that you may go back to the world of the living, where there is much, much more than just pure hatred!" Hoomaru continues and tears apart the Life Fiber which starts to corrupt her body.

"Rei..."

"Now go, little troublemaker and make me proud! I love you, little girl..." Hoomaru smiles and pushes Nui into the Life Fiber that starts sucking her up.

"NO!"

Slowly, Nui's body dissolves, first her legs, then her torso, and finally, the arms and the head, and during that, she can see how Hoomaru's body dissolves. The remains of her turn into Life Fibers and enter the Life Fiber with Nui. It disappears.

Inside the Life Fiber, Nui is but a mere little Thread. In front of her, she can see another thread. Hoomaru's remains that are now converted into Life Fibers start to repair both bodies - her human

body in front of her, and her Life Fiber form that is her right now. Slowly but steady, flesh and organs build together out of the Life Fibers, simultaneously to her Life Fiber body that slowly gains it's various parts back. The Life Fiber is deeply dark inside, nothing can be seen except herself. While this happens, Nui falls from the sky of the dark hall she is in, and on the ground, there seems to be a window that leads back to Okishima - and back to Earth. Her hair regenerates, her skin gains color, and the limbs are formed. Her eyes... regenerate fully. No wounds... nothing.

"... grrr..."

The closer Nui comes to the portal, the more aggressive she becomes. Briefly before she reaches the window, both bodies regenerate fully... and with that, she can come back to live.

Nui screams furious before flying through the window. As it closes, the Life Fiber Form stays in the dark hall and the human body goes back with Nui into the window - the Life Fiber Form will walk the same steps like Nui, do the same gestures, it will mirror all of her moves, but in the dark halls, and whenever needed, she can call back on it...

...

Nui wakes up on Okishima and catches air! Everything around her is destroyed - dead Life Fibers, dead humans, destroyed buildings...

... and she's naked on top of that. Noticing that, she looks around and sees the Layer of the High Entity in the sky that slowly moves to Honnouji. It's far away but reachable with a fast vehicle. Ôsaka burns - Ryuko and Satsuki must be there, or with the Entity... or worse. In any case, Nui ain't gonna let the Entity escape.

She looks around.

Her yellow bow is gone.

Her. Yellow. Bow. Is. Gone...

This was a gift of Ryuko. A gift of her big sister. Nui bites her teeth together in anger. Her eyes glow up read. Dead Life Fibers on the ground slowly move up - and with her new powers, she combines the Life Fibers and sews a new outfit together.

It's rather shredded, it doesn't look as elegant as other outfits she did, or beautiful.

It looks like a mad person cut it together to spread fear and anxiety on it's enemies. It's a large robe combined with a big skirt that goes until her kneecaps. The robe goes up to the shoulders, reveals them, other than that, everything else is covered. Both parts of her outfit are dark red, several loose belts hang on her taille and torso - red, bloody gloves with open fingertips, a necklace hanging on a choker that has the letters "R/S" written on it, for Ryuko and Satsuki. Undefined patterns are on the upper part of her outfit. Her hair is ravaged, however, as long as before. A large, yellow streak covers her left eye partially: more importantly however, all wounds are gone, even the one that was on her left eye before. The outfit heavily reminds of the appearance of an 19th century noble woman - but it's not made with love, but with anger and fury. A few Life Fibers see Nui, and when they do, they hiss scared and retreat as she looks around.

(AN: Feel free to type in "Nui Harime Early Concept Art" on Google Image search. Then you get a rough idea of how she looks like now - like that, but covering more skin and with a more aggressive appearance.)

Nui grabs the scissor blades and puts them into a little pocket and grabs her rifle. She can't produce new ammo right now, she needs to save her sisters, every second counts. Opening the weapon reveals three more rounds in the clip. Nui unlocks the weapon, a pling is audible, and then she looks up to the High Entity as the outfit moves with the wind.

"Now I'm really fucking mad..."

...

...

...

AN: Ryuko and Satsuki are captured, Nudist Beach escaped... and Hoomaru gave her existence for Nui. All I'm going to say is this: the next part will be incredibly epic, and moreso the final battle of this chapter. I already got the track for it. ;) I always say I got the best part last, and I dare to say that in the next two parts, you guys will see that best part. I really want to get this done as soon as possible, because I bet you guys want to know how this all continues and if the mad Nui can really save her sisters now. One thing is sure: the High Entity fucked up really hard! As always, leave a review if you like and I'll see you hopefully as soon as possible again!

The Things I Did For You 2-3

AN: Finally. :) Have a new cover for the story too, look, it's Nui on it!

Humans whimper as Life Fibers sing an uncalming melody, while the Layer hovers above the large army of the High Entity. Humans, young and old, are kept as hostages by the Life Fibers. Around them, various monstrosities of the Life Fibers guard their food. The large "Tower Fibers", others, such as spider like Life Fibers, push slower humans every once in a while.

At the very front of the red ocean, Ryuko and Satsuki are guarded by Ichiro's Couturiers. Senketsu looks around - they can see the coast of Japan and aggressive waves breaking on the rocks. All of these humans walk on foot, some groups faster than others, some Life Fibers are carried by others...

"What are you going to do with us!?" a young man yells scared, and yet, the Life Fibers only give melodies as answer.

"Stop it!"

"We haven't done anything to you!"

...

In the distance, Ryuko, Satsuki and the Director see the zeppelin in the air. On foot, it would take days to reach Tokyo, which is why all humans that have been caught by the Life Fibers are brought into Orbs for further transportation, of which some seem to be sent back into the Layer of the High Entity. It appears that these orbs can be entered, therefore. The area around them is corrupted, as Life Fibers spread on the ground to cover the earth - as if they plan to cover the planet in clothing. Just like back then - only less destructive. Via the Layer, the distance from Ôsaka to Tokyo can be travelled much faster, and it's why another orb lands in front of the army as the

larger monsters prepare to move on into the other areas of Japan to spread more chaos.

Ichiro watches how one of these orbs land in front of him. He opens it with his scythe and then points with the weapon at Ryuko and Satsuki.

"Enter it." he orders. A few Life Fibers touch Satsuki, yet she pushes them away with her arms. With curious looks, they watch the young Kiryuin. Ragyo is treated like trash, pushed by the Life Fibers, and hitting them, even with her Fiber Arms, just amuses them even further. Some don't even mind being hit by her. It's all to their amusement. Only very few Senketsu notices rather stay away from her, or seem to not agree with how their fellow comrades treat Satsuki's sister. These could be some of the Life Fibers that follow Hinata's orders. He may have ordered them to leave both sisters alone.

Ichiro enters the orb as well. Inside it, only red darkness awaits them, and a monotonous sound. Sometimes, they can hear a slight whisper. Ichiro watches both sisters with a sinister look, moving the scythe to the left and right closely while the orb flies up to the Layer.

"So what'cha gonna do now, now that you got us, hm? Gonna serve that weird thing you call Entity more?" Ryuko asks annoyed. Ichiro turns his head to her.

"None of your business, Matoi."

"You think you could get away with this, huh?"

"Yeah."

"If only you had a slice of the personality Nui has, then it wouldn't be completely annoying to talk with you. Why even do all of this? Just... just leave. You and your friends. Fuck, if you want to kill us, then do it, but leave this fucking planet alone."

"Mhmhm."

"This Entity thingy is only using you."

"I know, I'm aware and I don't like it. It's why your sister is allowed to keep her weapon."

"Why? You want us to kill it?"

"Oh you won't kill it. You'll just distract it, mhmhm. Do whatever you want. In the end, it will kill you. Too bad I couldn't do it. Then again... looking at your new limbs... I'm okay with what I did." he smiles.

"You smile but once you lose your limbs yourself it's not as funny as you think."

"Absolutely, Matoi. However: I haven't lost them. So why would I care?" he asks. Ryuko shakes her head in disbelief. There really is absolutely no remorse. More and more, she gets the idea that this man truly is nothing but a Doppelgänger instead of something that was corrupted as well. The orb causes strange noises. Is it reaching the Layer?

"So what does this Entity thing wants from us again? Or is it still trying to act like a strange and mysterious piece of dirt as usual?" Ryuko asks.

"I don't know. And again: I don't care." he chuckles and leans back. Life Fibers crawl into his coat, making it appear like they would hug and welcome him back to his home.

"Pfft..."

"Save the breath, Ryuko. He won't speak." Satsuki says.

"I guess."

...

On the zeppelin bridge, Takarada, Sanageyama and Houka watch the gigantic Layer that is following them. The zeppelin is approximately about 30-40 minutes away from it. All that is left of Ôsaka are burning houses and flames, and the corruption of the Life Fibers that spread across the area.

"These clowns will catch up on us..." Sanageyama mentions, Takarada nods.

"If they fire these red orb thingies on us, then we're getting into real trouble." he mocks as he watches the sphere following them. Houka comments.

"Then we should prepare helicopters for a battle and get the rescue capsules ready just in case. Based on my knowledge and the estimated damage these orbs would cause on the ship's hull, it would take a few minutes until the zeppelin crashes."

"Don't we have an outpost in Tokyo? Took a look at the map recently, we might get some support there in case things turn south." Sanageyama mentions.

"Yes. I'll message them as well as other groups later to prepare for a fight. We need as many allies as possible." Houka answers and leaves the bridge, however, he seems to have forgot one thing.

"... oh yes, and they should make sure people evacuate Tokyo and make the citizens there hide in bunkers or houses..." he continues and then leaves the room.

"Man, this is bullshit. That ain't gonna be an honorable fight like I would prefer it." Sanageyama mumbles annoyed.

"Meh, should have spent more money into weapon research."

"Hey to be fair, who would have thought these aliens visit us with something you can't even compare to this primordial Life Fiber thingy because it's so fucking big."

"And then it spits out these red spheres."

"Exactly my words..."

...

Ryuko observes Life Fibers cells crawling through small rifts inside the walls. Noises seem to activate a door mechanism, although they sound rather organical, as if slime would move. Briefly after, a gate next to the sisters open, apparently some sort of entrance room in which nothing can be found except for Life Fibers at the walls. Ichiro stands up and grabs Ryuko who he's pushing forward, while he keeps Satsuki in peace.

"Move, hybrid." he orders.

"Don't you dare touching me, assface!" Ryuko reacts and turns around, punching his face with her black Life Fiber fist which does leave an impact strong enough to actually react by threatening Ryuko with the scythe.

"You know, I'm keeping you alive because I know the Entity is much more cruel than I could ever be and I want you to suffer, but if you attack me ONE LAST TIME, I'll tear you apart, cut the skin that is left of you into clothes and throw it all onto Mako Mankanshokus burning corpse once I find her, you worthless whore!" he screams aggressive. This is probably the best proof he had it with Ryuko now. Ryuko moves the scythe away slowly.

"Yeah. Gotcha." she says frustrated and turns around to move on with Satsuki who's calm and resolve. Life Fibers gently try to crawl up their shoes, but every step they do rips them away from the women. Soon, they reach a door made out of several rifts, held together by Life Fibers. If close enough, the door will open and grant an entrance, and that happens.

When the entrance opens, Ryuko and Satsuki startle up latently, Senketsu makes a big eye. The Director forces them to move

forward.

It's an incredibly large, several meters tall and broad hall with space for more than hundreds of humans... or Life Fibers. Everywhere on the walls are holes from which eyes look out. Small, little Life Fibers crawl up and down, various grotesk monster move around the ground next to Ryuko and Satsuki and follow their own goals, some even go closer to examine them. Singing can be heard - at the moment, the Life Fibers are calm and curious. On the ground are additional holes that seem to lead into other parts of the Layer from the looks of it. Giant, orange Life Fibers hang here and there - they might be responsible for keeping it together.

Everything here reminds partially of a bee hive, but with more structure and made for humans, probably with stairs and elevators too, or other forms of transportation. Iori and Houka would be greatly interested in this, that's for sure.

"Oh my..." Senketsu mumbles surprised.

"Your old home, Kamui, when you were nothing but a little sad Fiber who's only cell was allowed to frequent in these holy halls."

"Shut up." Ryuko insults Ichiro protective. Ichiro sings in an strange, hardly comprehensible voice with the Life Fibers - the sounds they make are foreign for humans and for Satsuki, they even cause slight ear aches, as she never heard them. Ichiro chuckles and pats Ryuko's shoulder.

"What's so funny?" Ryuko asks. The Life Fibers around them seem to mock about Satsuki and especially Ryuko. Ichiro turns around, preparing to leave.

"I'm afraid I need to go and leave you to the underlings of the Entity. They'll treat you well, I'm sure of it, aha... soon you'll meet your maker." Ichiro chuckles.

"You laugh but look at yourself! You think you got the biggest D but got your ass kicked by Nui, what, did she fucked you up so hard that you need to laugh about it because you couldn't process it otherwise?" Ryuko yells towards Ichiro as he leaves the hall. Ichiro turns around as Satsuki is surrounded by the Life Fibers.

He simply laughs and disappears. Since he doesn't say anything about Nui, and since he looks rather bad with his missing eye and the large wound in his face, Ryuko believes that Nui might be still alive, maybe even with Mikisugi. There isn't really much time to think about it, briefly after, several Life Fibers crawl towards Ryuko and Satsuki and force them to continue their journey through the large Layer, visiting various halls full of strange artifacts and objects with unearthly forms. Some of the larger halls consist of mouth like holes with stings on the walls inside that move back and forward very slowly. In one hall, they find a large wall with a Life Fiber face, distorted, and it's eyes that are three times larger than Ryuko's body look empty. It's mouth is horrifying and as it opens it very slightly, quick movements are visible, too quick to look at it without feeling uncomfortable.

In other rooms, there are holes out of which the abominations the Life Fibers have created look out. Some have rooms with mechanisms that produce Life Fibers - both sisters visit one of those rooms and watch how inside one of those holes, a few white and orange Life Fibers combine, until they are fused with red Life Fibers to create a very primitive mind and even more primitive body, even though the process seems to take several days. It would explain why, compared with humans, there aren't many Life Fibers that can truly think and stand on their own.

After a few more rooms, they eventually arrive in an indescribable large room in which a big monster resides - a Colossus. A Colossus is a Life Fiber Being with five large legs, an even larger Torso with several hundreds of holes from which eyes look out inside, and a head that lacks said eyes, but instead, having mouths and rifts. The

Colossus is not as tall as a Tower Fiber however - about 12 meters tall and 8 meters broad. His steps are very slow but impactful.

A gate on a Life Fiber construction opens above them - there, they can see a shining white person. It's one of the Entities from the looks of it, who's looking down at them. The sublime life form hovers down and orders the Colossus without any words to stomp aside. Said Colossus starts moving, however, he seems to be overly careful with Ryuko and Satsuki as he looks with his many eyes at them, even taking proper distance between them and himself to make sure he doesn't even touch them. It appears surreal yet somewhat... cute and empathic. The other Life Fibers do not care, after all, he does however. The Entity copy approaches Ryuko and Satsuki as they wait at a wall.

"... so it is truly you... those demanded by the sublime overlord..." the Entity says calm. Ryuko doesn't answer, Satsuki listens.

"You... are the offspring of who we called "Ragyo Kiryuin"...?"

Satsuki doesn't answer yet looks into the eyes of the copy. They aren't empty, but you can't really say they are filled either. Something moves in them - tiny little Life Fibers inside it.

"... truly... you remind of your... creator..." the thing says interested. Then, the Entity turns to Ryuko and touches her red hair streak.

"And you... are Ryuko... Matoi?"

"Congrats. You got my name right." Ryuko says. The Entity looks down to Senketsu.

"... I... remember you... once, you wandered through the dark halls."

Senketsu can't remember, hence why he doesn't answer.

"The Entity will be pleased..." it says and leaves via the entrance it came from. The Colossus and a few more Life Fibers start to watch

Ryuko and Satsuki. Up there are more stings that sometimes go back into the walls. Who knows how long they need to stay here now...

...

Mikisugi and some of his men managed to get Tsumugu out of the bunker. Right now, they are hiding from the few Life Fibers left on Okishima who are searching for more humans. Tsumugu and his men sit with Mikisugi on a small wall and watch a pair of Life Fiber humanoids searching the area.

"Ready."

"Ready."

"Ready." the men and women say. There is a woman near the car who's fueling it up at the moment. The car is armored and has backdoors as well as a turret on the roof that can be controlled by one soldier. The fog is lifted mostly.

"Wait for my sign." Mikisugi orders his men while he's looking with binoculars. Tsumugu smokes a cigarette while aiming with his trusty sniper rifle.

"Let them walk another moment and I can hit both with one bullet." he mentions cool as he waits patiently. The Life Fibers both crawl towards each other to talk apparently via singing. Both their heads almost lie parallel towards each other, Tsumugu could eliminate them briefly with a good headshot. His other soldiers aim at the monsters as well.

"Not many here anymore, hm?" Mikisugi asks.

"Doesn't look like it."

"Boss?" one of the soldiers ask.

"Wait another moment."

Both Life Fibers stand still now.

"Fire." Mikisugi orders. Tsumugu and his soldiers are about to shoot until they suddenly see the Life Fibers shush up scared, and briefly after, they just run away. Tsumugu takes a closer look through his scope. There is no reason for them to just run away. Out of the fog, additional Life Fibers retreat... and the reason for that is an angry Nui who's leaving said fog, walking towards Mikisugi and the others.

They notice how angry Nui appears - it's well visible in her annoyed yet calm face expression and the aggressive body stance, and how she's holding her weapon - tight, while her upper body is leaned forward a bit, as if she's keeping her head down a bit.

Tsumugu's cigarette falls out of his mouth.

"... man... is there anything that can kill her?" Mikisugi asks.

"MIKISUGI!" Nui yells angry. Tsumugu looks worried towards Mikisugi.

"Be careful." he says. Mikisugi climbs down the tower while the Life Fibers continue to retreat.

"You're alive!"

"Is the car ready?!"

"Any moment, what..."

"We don't have a moment, get in." she orders and climbs into the car. Without resistance, the other Nudist Beach soldiers follow her orders. Mikisugi shrugs with his shoulders, he would have ordered the same anyway, only Tsumugu still seems to be annoyed by Nui's presence. He however follows her as well and joins the group in the car with the soldiers.

"So what's the plan, Mr. Mikisugi?" one soldier asks.

"Ask her, she's the boss right now."

"But she's Life Fi..."

"I think she proved several times now that she's cool with us, Life Fibers or not, I mean, she just cleared out the base with her presence. And besides... I'm sure she knows more about this thing in the air than we do." Mikisugi mentions and looks to Nui who's hanging her rifle onto her back, then, she creates a small diorama with Life Fibers in the air.

"The thing up there is the High Entity and we're going to follow that bitch, no matter how many ambushes we'll trigger. If the radio still works, tell the others we're on our way."

"Ôsaka said the zeppelin is moving to Tokyo so this would be the next target." a man says.

"So it's Tokyo, sweet. We drive to Tokyo, we catch up with the others, then you guys let me out at the Entity."

"That's suicide, Nui." Mikisugi mentions worried. Nui turns her head to him.

"Suicide is a running gag that stopped being funny after the first time, love." she answers. The others nod, Tsumugu sits in the corner and watches Nui with closed arms. With the amount of revivals she experienced, he find her not to be trusted still. Everyone can do a few good deeds but that doesn't allow them to find absolution in his opinion.

"Well, I guess that's a plan." a soldier says.

"At least we won't sit around and do nothing. Yoko, you heard what the woman said, we'll visit Tokyo now." Mikisugi orders.

"Sure thing, boss." she answers and starts driving. The car eventually leaves Okishima and proceeds to move to Ôsaka where it

can follow the Entity via the highway...

...

The zeppelin managed to travel a large part of the journey already and finds itself now back above Nagoya. The Entity still follows the air ship of Nudist Beach, and it left a part of it's forces in the cities and streets around it, ensuring chaos is incited under the civilians.

Houka and Iori both are stressed, along with other soldiers, who are sending messages via Radio to the outposts near them - that includes the ones in Nagoya as well. Down on the streets it's gotten quiet and silent. The tall walls of Nagoya provide a certain amount of security hence why the Life Fiber activity there isn't as high as in the cities before. Still, smaller orbs fly down to the city to cause chaos where they can, and it's why the zeppelin tries to fly into the lesser populated parts of the city to minimize the risk for the citizens there.

In the meantime, Nonon's status seems to have partially stabilized. She's still in the bed, but at the very least, she can stand on her own carefully. Gamagoori helps her. Nonon seems broken and helpless. The poor woman still wears her regalia, although it's been ripped into two halves, revealing the bandages.

"Don't force yourself to more than you can endure, Jakuzure."

"... and what do we do now?"

"Wait. And hope that we receive reinforcements with which we can take down Honnouji."

"And... what's with Satsuki and... *coughs*... the others?"

"I don't know. All I know is that we are currently asking for help all around the country, gathering everyone who can use a weapon or provide equipment." he sighs.

"... oh..."

"Lay down. It's honorable that you want to find out how the others are and how we are doing at the moment, but right now, you need to focus on yourself. I shall protect you at all time."

"... but... at the very... le-least... I don't need a weapon... to support in combat..."

"Mhm. I haven't seen your musician clones yet."

"... not those too..."

"I'm sorry. I can tell you warmed up on them."

"... this... son of a... if I catch him, I'll... deafen his eyes until they bleed..." she bites her teeth in pain as she sees the bandages on her torso, breast and shoulder area.

"Hey. Calm down. You get your chance, I'm sure of it." Gamagoori asks. Nonon breathes in and out and nods briefly after.

"... yeah... I just hope the others are okay."

...

In an radio station below the roof, noises can be heard. Houka's voice specifically.

"Nudist Alpha to all outposts and supporting forces, Nudist Alpha to all outposts and supporting forces.

We need backup close to Tokyo in 180 minutes, all available units move to the docks. Weaponized vehicle are required, all leading officers send a message as soon as possible.

Nudist Alpha to all outposts and supporting forces..."

The door is slammed open.

"OOOOOOOOOHH YEAH! FINALLY I CAN FIND A USE FOR THIS HUGE TANK I STOLE, AHAHAH!" Maiko Ogure laughs in the background and jumps out of the window.

"SORRY!"

...

More time passes...

...

Mikisugi, Tsumugu, Nui and the rest chase the Layer of the High Entity. The highway is clear thanks to the Life Fibers, however, corruption spread out everywhere as well. Tsumugu takes a look around while he's on the turret.

Everything's destroyed or covered by Life Fibers.

Tsumugu climbs back into the car and sits down near a dark corner where he sighs annoyed. The soldiers have a small conversation in the meantime, Nui sits on the other corner in front of Tsumugu. Both look at each other with an annoyed face expression. Mikisugi and the driver focus on the street, in the distance, they can see a group of Life Fibers keeping their eyes open. Mikisugi turns to his men.

"Looks like we're about to get some company." he warns.

"Where are we at the moment, boss?"

"Close to Shizouka."

Around the group, houses have been destroyed or emptied. As they leave the outskirts and enter the larger parts of the city, they experience the full impact of the Life Fibers on the city. Orbs corrupt the area, and some buildings burn down. The group passes the Life Fibers that can't follow up. Via small windows, the soldiers can observe what happened out of the city.

Life Fibers crawl on the walls, the streets painted with blood and destroyed clothes - the Life Fibers seem to have gathered the citizens here and killed them collectively, but how?

Debris are on the ground, and the red sky causes more terror and anxiety for the poor citizen of the city.

"Man, look at this shit." one soldier says. Steps can be heard in the distance. There must be something huge in the city.

"These monsters will destroy everything if we don't stop them."

"We can't even protect the people here, they don't deserve that."

Mikisugi sighs. Further away, a large building collapses and generates smoke in the surrounding streets. In some alleys, Life Fiber Beings hunt down humans or watch Mikisugi and the rest.

"No one deserved this." he says. Tsumugu pulls on his cigarette calmly, but cautious of her. Nui notices that.

"Look at someone else."

"I don't trust you, Life Fiber."

"Good for you."

"Monsters like you are the reason why we need to exist. Once we're done with these friends of yours, I'll make sure you get your punishment too. Don't think just because you help us, everything is forgotten. But for the moment, you should enjoy this. After all, this is what you always wanted, hm? Everyone needs to die. Everyone needs to turn into food. Look around."

Nui breathes in and out and smiles briefly.

"Shut the fuck up." she says.

"Say again?"

"I said " **Shut the fuck up** ". Now shut your fucking mouth before I'll sew it together."

"Careful with your words."

"Hey!" Mikisugi yells annoyed.

"Stop this nonsense. We can't afford to annoy each oth..."

(AN: Feel free to listen to "Titanfall 2 OST - Frontier Defense Midwave 02" on YouTube, this part fits very well. In general, expect to listen to a lot of music today.)

"OH SHIT TOWER FIBER!" the driver yells and turns the car, Mikisugi turns to the front and sees a Tower Fiber standing up on the next corner. The car takes some damage as the large monster hits it with it's left leg. The soldiers grab their weapons, while the Tower Fiber starts screaming terrifying. It wants to stomp them, and, despite it's tall appearance, it runs rather fast. Small craters are left on the spots it walks on.

"These screams are ear deafening!" a man says as he reloads his weapon.

"That ain't a scream, that's him calling for support!" Nui reacts since she understands the Life Fiber language. She, and other soldiers, climb to the backdoor and open it, while Tsumugu mans the turret. Out of the alleys, Life Fibers follow them.

"Did he woke up the city!?" Mikisugi asks. The men start aiming out of the backdoor and the windows, Tsumugu readies the turret. The turret is armed with the best ammo Nudist Beach can equip for their operations, a type of ammo they only use for DTRs. Large Anti Life Fiber needles, which can take down a monster for a brief time if hit enough.

"Stop talking and start shooting!" Nui says annoyed and fires at the first Life Fiber she can see with a normal Nudist Beach needle rifle,

with a ten round clip and a red window inside the clip, allowing her and the other soldiers armed with it to see how many rounds are left. From a rooftop on their right, a dog like Life Fiber Being chases them, with the abomination being as big as the car. The soldiers open fire, Tsumugu deals with the Tower Fiber following them.

Mikisugi focuses on the street in front of him and the driver. The group needs to drive a few more minutes to leave Shizouka entirely. At least, they can see the zeppelin and the Entity, so they are catching up. The Tower Fiber eagerly follows them, Tsumugu fires the turret on it and causes small holes in it, however, he aims on the leg, since, if one leg breaks apart, the Tower Fiber can't follow them any longer. The smaller Life Fibers can be kept away with the Needle Rifles. The car turns to the left and drives through a hole - one that leads into a destroyed shopping mall with several floors. It doesn't stop the dog like Life Fiber and the Tower Fiber from chasing them, and the Tower Fiber continues to run at the building. Due to it's physical strength, it can slowly break the building apart, and it forces Tsumugu to shoot something else, since the debris it causes serve as cover. Inside the shopping center, several rooms are filled with Life Fibers, of which some of them play with humans, but as they see the car, they focus on it and leave them alone.

Shortly after, it seems like there is no exit out of the shopping center, at least none without risking a motor damage, since the walls can't be rammed, they're concrete after all.

However, Mikisugi notices roll stairs that stopped working, and the car can drive on bad terrain.

"Drive up there!" he orders the driver who turns the car to the right, driving around the stairs and then up. She presses with her foot against the pedal as hard as possible, and indeed, thanks to the good wheels, the car is able to slowly but steady drive up. Tsumugu continues to fire on the dog like "Hunter Fiber", whose legs however can't properly be shot at. Life Fibers crawl up the stairs as the Hunter climbs up. Some of the smaller Life Fibers remind of snake like monsters, but with stings on their back, and a mouth that goes even

to the side. Opening their mouth would open half their body. Nui and the other soldiers shoot those monsters.

"Jesus, are they ugly!"

"What kinda bastards are these guys!?"

"Imitations of other species, darlings! Trust me, there are way uglier Life Fibers!" Nui clarifies. The car stops driving on the last two steps, and the Life Fibers come closer.

"Boss, we got a problem."

"I can see that, gimme a second." Mikisugi answers and climbs to the back of the car, opening the weapon crate and looking for an item. A Life Fiber monster crawls onto the roof of the car and attacks Tsumugu - he pulls out a knife and defends himself. By ramming the knife into the monster's face, it's stunned for a brief second and stumbles from the roof again. Mikisugi pushes Nui and the soldiers away.

"Grenade's out." he says cool and throws a grenade into the group of monsters and directly behind the car. The soldiers then close the door and keep it closed, Tsumugu climbs into the car to take cover. Briefly other, an explosion occurs and slams the car to the next floor. More Life Fibers appear that climb up the walls. The car drives next to the fences on the right and a few meters in front of them, they can see a window wall that leaves out of the infested building. The driver keeps increasing the speed and then rams the windows.

The car flies out of the building and onto a large, open area, reminiscing of an attraction park. There is also a large ferris wheel in the middle of it. A Colossus stands next to the ferris wheel and touches it curiously, but when the car drives pass him, he accidentally rams the ferris wheel and causes it to slowly break. Mikisugi, Nui, Tsumugu and their companions look up. The ferris wheel is falling to the ground.

"Ah crap." Tsumugu says.

"Drive faster!" Mikisugi orders.

"The car is at the limit!"

"Then find cover or something, there's a ferris wheel landing onto us soon!"

"A FERRIS WHEEL!?"

The Tower Fiber continues to chase the group and destroys the shopping center entirely. It comes closer and closer.

"Anyone got an idea!?" Mikisugi asks.

"... grrr... these assholes piss me off." Nui mumbles and drops her weapon, then opens the backdoor and raises her hands - this causes, all of a sudden, living Life Fiber Beings to melt into each other. The Tower Fiber, the Colossus and the other Life Fibers around them seem to appear surprised as she starts stitching their friends together. Nui then forms her hands into fists, thus creating some sort of wall made out of Life Fibers that cover the car. The wall is several meters tall and hinders the Tower Fiber from chasing them. The wall, made out of Life Fiber bodies now catches the falling ferris wheel for a few seconds, and these are enough to let the group escape, while the Tower Fiber is buried by the debris, screaming angry.

"Couldn't you come up with this shit any sooner!?" Tsumugu asks angry.

"Is crying all you can do?" Nui counters annoyed.

The car continues driving and slowly leaves Shizouka. Only small Life Fibers Beings follow them, but they aren't fast enough, and the Hunter seems to be stopped thanks to the debris. That could have gone wrong...

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(AN: Now listen to "Titanfall 2 OST - CTF Almost Done" on YouTube.)

The Life Fiber army slowly reaches the outskirts of Tokyo. Everything behind them is destroyed, and the red ocean they leave covers the dirt, the trees, everything. Only snow covers the ocean, and only partially. From this height, the Honnouji Academy is visible on the horizon. The waves in the water break on it's walls.

Ichiro and a few of his Couturiers stand on a fast, large orb and watch how the Entity's underlings can barely follow them on the ground. The psycho stays calm and focused, he wants the plan he and his transformed Couturiers had in mind to succeed. Orbs move to Honnouji and Tokyo, the Layer itself hovers about the capital city though, probably to capture more humans as a means of feeding it's monstrous inhabitants. The zeppelin in the distance gets closer to the docks.

Sanageyama, Iori, Houka and Takarada watch how the Life Fiber come closer to the zeppelin and the city.

"How's the situation on reinforcements?" Sanageyama asks Houka.

"All units in Tokyo and close to the city are on their way, but the others... I don't know. I told them to evacuate whoever they can."

"Gotcha. Man. Hope Ryuko and Satsuki are doing alright. I'm not really in the mood for a funeral." he answers. Iori closes his arms.

"I wonder how these monsters can even live in the first place. They work totally different than the Life Fibers we got to know. Normally, they need blood... but why don't they need any?" Iori asks confused.

"I assume they are well developed. But that's all I can say." Houka answers. Suddenly, one of Takarada's soldiers run into the room and catches air.

"Boss, Boss!"

Takarada jumps up shocked and turns around.

"Stop screaming! What is it?"

"Got a message from... phew... this Aikuro Mikisugi dude!"

Sanageyama, Houka and Iori appear relieved, Takarada catches the radio. In the background, he can hear the car and shots being fired every once in a while.

"Mikisugi!" Takarada mocks into the radio.

"Takarada! Hey, good to hear from you, really good day, isn't it, tell me, is the zeppelin alright?" Mikisugi smiles mischievous and clears his throat when he looks back to see a horde of Life Fibers chasing them.

"Oh yeah, obviously, I'm having the time of my life right now! We're only being chased by this overdimensional large wool ball that, on top of it, even spits out additional wool balls!"

"Oh glad to hear you're getting married, listen, the zeppelin has helicopters in the hangar, how about you guys visit the Honnouji Academy while Tsumugu, Nui and me are on the way! We'll try to get you guys more time."

"These monsters are doing business in Tokyo, you could..."

"CAREFUL THERE'S AN ORB!" Sanageyama yells and pushes Takarada away as Houka and Iori run away. An orb rams the walls of the bridge and destroys the walls, a few Life Fibers enter it as well. The radio drops out of the zeppelin, some of the surveillance monitors are destroyed and electricity lightnings leave a wall.

"Looks like they're already in combat distance." Iori mentions.

"Then we should fire back. Gonna order the others to turn the zeppelin, then the turrets can open fire!" Sanageyama answers and runs to the radio station one floor above of them. Takarada and Houka leave the bridge to alarm additional men and women. Briefly after the incident, the alarm goes off and the lights go red.

Gamagoori and Nonon look up as they see the lights.

"What's... going on now?"

"I fear the Life Fibers are attacking now."

"... oh man."

"Wait, I'll pick you up. You can sit on my shoulder, we need to go." Gamagoori suggests and grabs Nonon, who climbs up onto Gamagoori's shoulder. Both walk through the zeppelin halls and past the men and women who are readying up the weapons of the air ship. Via ladders, stairs and elevators, one can move up or down the various floors of the zeppelin. Right above them, the first turrets start firing. Little elevators allow soldiers to move up ammo crates to the turrets.

Gamagoori and Nonon reach the bridge soon after and find Sanageyama and Iori assigning orders to the soldiers.

"Uzu!" Nonon yells. He turns around.

"Nonon, Ira?"

"What is going on?!" Nonon asks. Sanageyama points with his finger towards the window and the Layer of the High Entity.

"This thing is firing at us with these red orbs."

"If I had my musicians..." she mumbles angry. Explosions lighten up the sky, the turrets start firing at the moving orbs, and while they

aren't too many, they can sustain a lot of damage.

"Oh they're going to be surprised what we got in store for the zeppelin in case they come too close to us." Sanageyama mentions. He must know it, after all, he built the zeppelin. Even though the Entity is in an advantage - Nudist Beach surely has something evil planned for it, in case things go south. It's why he is so confident still.

...

(AN: And now "Titanfall 2 OST - Frontier Defense Final Wave 01")

Mikisugi and his companions reached Tokyo. Behind them, more and more Life Fibers chase the group, however, only very few can really keep up with them. They just left the outskirts of the city and are about to reach the more populated and inner parts of the city. A soldier takes a look at the Layer of the High Entity that is above them.

"Look at this huge thing..." he says. Tsumugu looks out via the turret.

"As big as half the city. Who knows how many of these monsters live there." Tsumugu wonders. Mikisugi watches how Life Fibers crawl on the roofs of the skyscrapers, and an orb crashing into one of them. Debris fall onto the street and bury Life Fibers and empty cars. Humans run away, panicking as the Life Fibers hunt them down. As they reach one of the larger places of the city, they meet a Colossus who slowly turns to them.

"God, that thing is something else!" a soldier says. The car turns to the side and takes the route via the main street. Neo-REVOCS advertisement still hangs here and there, but that quickly changes as the car escapes from the following Life Fiber monsters - although the Colossus just stands around, doing nothing. He just likes staying at the same place.

However, not all Life Fibers are that peaceful, especially a Tower Fiber who starts chasing the group. Tsumugu shoots at it's feet, but

the monster doesn't mind it too much.

"Damn it, this thing eats up my ammo!" Tsumugu yells and looks at the ammo counter, worried he might not have enough to eliminate it. The Tower Fiber sustains more than he expected at first.

"Uh, so what should one do in such a situation?" a soldier asks.

"Do we have explosives!?" Tsumugu asks. One of the soldiers open the weapon crate and find a bundle of C4, ready to be thrown and detonated. Said soldier climbs next to Nui while she is reloading and throws the C4 towards the Tower Fiber onto the street, then he detonates it, and indeed, the Tower Fiber's legs are shredded through this. Helicopters fly above them, they must be from the zeppelin.

"Where to now?!" the driver asks.

"As far as away from the harbor as possible so that the others can siege Honnouji! With the helicopters and the zeppelin alone they can't do much inside the Academy, they need backup for vehicles or..."

"Head's down!" Tsumugu yells as a Hunter jumps onto the front part of the car, attacking him and hitting his shoulder, causing an evil bleeding wound. Tsumugu shoots the monster from the car luckily, but now he's injured. As another Hunter joins the chase, it tries to climb into the back of the car, but seeing Nui suddenly causes it to panickly jump out again, as if she is the devil for it.

There isn't too much time to think about it when another skyscraper breaks apart. The debris barricade the path in front of them and force the group to stop entirely. When they turn around, they find another Tower Fiber who throws a part of a large building at them. The car is hit and slams a few meters away but lands back onto it's wheels. The driver continues and reaches with the group the amusement mile of the city, where a group of policemen try to defend themselves, without much of a chance of survival however...

until Nudist Beach arrives, attacking and therefore lurking the Life Fibers away from them.

"We really got them onto our asses, didn't we?!"

"That's how it should be!" Mikisugi answers and looks forward. A few hundreds of meters away is a large open park close to the town hall of Tokyo.

"We'll drive through the park, provoke as many Life Fibers as possible and drive to the public airport! We got enough space to navigate there and escape in case they catch up with us!" Mikisugi orders and reloads a Needle Rifle.

"Got it, boss!" the driver says and speeds up the car while Nui, Tsumugu and the rest continue to hold off the pursuers with their weapons. Tsumugu's ammo is about to be depleted however.

"Gonna be out of ammo soon! How long until we get to the airport!?" Tsumugu rants.

"Bout fifteen minutes if everything goes well!" Mikisugi answers. Tsumugu slams his fist onto the roof.

"I don't have enough ammo for these bastards!"

"No need to, we don't need to kill them!"

"God damn it." he mumbles and continues firing. The car reaches the public park, where several hundreds of Life Fibers hunt down humans. The park is about one square kilometer big. Trees, bushes, a little lake, pavillions and more can be found, and it's clear this used to be a nice park for groups, friends and pairs - but now it turned into a playground for Life Fibers that sit on the roofs, looking for prey. The Entity throws out additional orbs, of which some of them hit the park.

"I'm out of ammo!" a soldier yells stressed.

"I don't have much either!"

When the group drives along the lake, they can see another Tower Fiber who walks on said lake, trying to catch them. With it's large arms, it tries to slam the car but misses with the first attack, however, the second one, as the arm lands in front of them, causes the car to stop once more.

"He's trying to cut us off!" Tsumugu yells and holds onto the turret. He can suddenly hear a monotonous humming.

"AND THEY'RE GOING TO CUT US IN HALF TOO IF WE DON'T MOVE NOW!" he continues surprised as he sees an orb flying directly into their direction.

"... cut... cut... cut..." Nui mumbles obsessed, her weapon on the ground and her eyes empty.

"GET MOVING!"

"We do what we can!" Mikisugi yells and then looks up himself. There really is an orb.

"MOVE!" Mikisugi yells as well now.

"I'M TRYING MY BEST!"

"THIS THING'S GONNA HIT US!" a soldier yells. The orb crashes into the car and slams it meters away into a building. Everything Nudist Beach and Nui wants the Entity to fail and it genuinely makes her angry. As the car lands into the building, Tsumugu and the driver are launched out of it, Mikisugi slams with his body against the controls, only Nui and the soldiers hold up well. Water however enters the car after - it must have continued rolling into the lake. The soldiers climb out of the car and watch how the tall Tower Fiber approaches them furthermore.

Nui climbs through the car and notices Mikisugi bleeding heavily, his torso open due to the crash, but he can survive it. Nui turns his body

to her and sees the wound. She touches it. Mikisugi can barely move.

"... grr... that... hurts..."

He's just a human. She shouldn't care at all.

But as she sees blood leaving his body, it pisses her off. The soldiers outside try to lure the Life Fibers away from Mikisugi. More Life Fibers reach the area and try to surround the humans. Nui slowly climbs up the car, standing on the roof, looking around and seeing more and bigger Life Fibers approaching the group.

Nui shrinks her Fiber rifle on the back and hides it in her clothes. When the Tower Fiber is about to attack her and kill Mikisugi, Nui forms her hands into fists, thus making the arms needles. She rams those into her own body. Blood falls onto Mikisugi as he watches Nui harming herself.

Nui bites her teeth together and rips open her body with the needles... but instead of displaying deadly wounds, the contrary happens - after the deed, her wounds shine up orange and red, and this causes the Tower Fiber to back away.

"... sorry... you need to... see this..." she mumbles angry to Mikisugi and looks up to the Life Fibers. Her entire body glows up orange, a small orb covers her, like Senketsu covering Ryuko whenever she transforms. The cloths disappear. Is it a Kamui she wears? That wouldn't work. Her body is made out of Life Fibers.

No.

It's apparently much more evil and worse than Mikisugi could imagine.

Life Fibers corrupt the ground around Nui and the car, yet they shine in yellow instead of red-orange, and when they reach the soldiers, they seem to protect them. The yellow Life Fibers additionally crawl

into the car and cover Mikisugi's wounds. They sew themselves onto his body and therefore heal him slowly.

Briefly after, the orb explodes and an orange shimmer is visible. When he looks up, he can't believe his own eyes.

"... oh my god."

Orange lightning like Life Fibers leave the remains of the orb and a Life Fiber Being leaves it. The Life Fibers around Mikisugi hiss scared, the Tower Fiber in the city, seeing the event, turns around immediately and runs, even orbs above them retreat. An hellish, incomprehensible scream leaves the shimmering Life Fiber Being that then starts moving fast enough to make it hardly to process for the human brain, that's how fast the thing Nui turned into became. Her Life Fiber form has the twin drills she always had, destroyed, shredded arms, some of the threads on them hang onto the ground, zig zag like feet and on her head, single Life Fiber cells perform erratic, lightning fast movements, and an terrifying melody leaves her grotesk, destroyed mouth, and the empty, monstrous dark eyes in her orange face reflect nothing but the Life Fibers they look at.

So this is what the Life Fibers always have been afraid of, and this is possibly another reason why she is such a threat for the High Entity - this power must be comparable to it, after all. The Life Fiber monsters panic up and run away, but those who dare to attack Ryuko's little sister don't just get killed - they get annihilated, shredded, and their deaths are anything but merciful, and even that is an understatement. Screams leave the dying Life Fibers. The Tower Fiber next to Mikisugi retreats, afraid of dragging Nui's wrath onto it, but it's the one thing she won't want to get away, after all, it's responsible for the orb hitting the car. Nui rams her shredded arms into the ground, forcing giant Life Fiber cells crawling through it, causing the lake to explode partially and ripping the Tower Fiber apart, slowly, and painful. The giant Life Fibers try to rip the legs apart.

The Tower Fiber screams scared for help, briefly after, Mikisugi watches how rifts appear in it's body. Desperately, the Tower Fiber tries to keep himself together by pressing his arms against his body, yet the power of the Grand Couturier is too much, and so, slowly but steady, the monster needs to watch how it slowly gets killed, until it starts crying, noticable on the melody it does, and the whimpering it leaves out.

Finally, the monster is ripped into two parts, the crying ends and it falls into the lake, with the water being launches onto the streets.

When the last living Life Fibers watch that, they do everything to run away. After less than five minutes, the area is completely cleared. Her corruption continues to seek up more humans. Those that are found scream anxious... but the corruption doesn't harm them, the Life Fibers only crawl onto the human body to look for wounds. If there are any, they heal said wounds, although in exchange for that they need to suck up the blood lost on that - it's a give and take, but it saves lifes.

After one more minute, everything has gone quiet. In the distance, the battle still goes on, but the park is completely cleared. Not a single Life Fiber is left and not a single one dares to enter it. They don't even sit on the roofs anymore - they all retreated.

Nui, with her quick moves, travels across the corrupted yellow ground. Mikisugi watches how in a matter of three seconds, Nui travels from one end of the lake to the other to catch up with him. Her head turns frighteningly fast to him, and moves like an engine that needs to be oiled again. It works, but it doesn't look right.

She looks terrifying. More than whatever that was with the primordial Life Fiber years ago.

"I'm... sorry..." she mumbles, probably because she hoped Mikisugi or any other human would never have to see this. This must be a product of her getting so angry that she completely flips out, which only empathizes the insane tolerance she has for pain, if one wants

to remember how Ryuko cut off her arms for example and all she did was yelling at her and getting more angry than usual.

Nui lastly moves swiftly to the building where the driver and Tsumugu landed into. As she uses Life Fibers to throw away the debris, she can find both the driver and Tsumugu under them. Lightnings made out of Life Fibers fly up out of her body, showing off her instable mind.

The driver seems to be alright, Tsumugu on the other hand is deadly wounded. Several flesh wounds everywhere, his torso open, and looking closely enough, you may even see one of his organs. When Nui and her Life Fiber corruption discover this, they sing an dark, uncalm melody. He lies dying on the ground, looking up at Nui, and yet... or maybe because of what stands in front of him... his anger for Life Fibers improved even further.

(AN: You could listen to "Atrium Carceri - Worship" until the scene ends for this if you like. I heavily recommend it.)

"... look at you... Life Fiber..." he bites his teeth together and coughs blood. Some of the Life Fibers crawl onto Tsumugu's body.

"... you'll gonna kill me... like the rest. You won't... help me... that's what you Life Fibers live for. Because you want... that blood. Just like... you and your friends... wanted the blood of my sister..."

Nui watches Tsumugu's wounds. Rarely does a medic see such terrible wounds and the person is still alive. He should be dead. And he will be dead soon. Nui could just sit it out. What should happen? No one can stop her. No Life Fiber. No human.

There seems to be a certain enjoyment in Nui when she watches Tsumugu in pain, once again showing her sadistic side, thanks to Ragyo.

No one would mind one more dead body, right? Would anyone except Mikisugi really mourn for Tsumugu? Wasn't he always an

asshole to Nui and Ryuko? Doesn't he deserve to die in vain now?

Nui raises one of her arms. The Life Fibers crawl closer onto his body, some even sling around his neck, and very few even climb up his chin. Nui's grotesque mouth tries to form a smile. It is able to do one, even though it's known that Life Fiber Beings shouldn't be able to express emotions physically - but it does, and it's the most horrifying thing Tsumugu ever saw. Slowly, the Life Fibers crawl into Tsumugu. Her head moves to the left and right, mechanically, not working entirely.

Now it's slowly getting obvious that Tsumugu doesn't want to die. Especially not like this. He wants to avenge Kinue, and now she's here to end him?

"F... uck... you... and go to... hell... where you... belong to..." he whimpers yet tries to stay brave. Nui slowly closes her shredded "hand" in the air. The Life Fibers set into the wounds.

But instead of killing or harming him, they start sewing the wounds together. They suck up the blood to process it into energy which they then use to slowly regenerate skin cells and some of the flesh, by converting into such - flesh made out of Life Fibers, not entirely human, but it works absolutely the same. Slowly, the wounds regenerate, until nothing but scars and lots of blood around the saved man are left.

The remaining Life Fibers crawl away and into Nui again. As Tsumugu slowly stands up, Nui leans her head towards him. Tsumugu can see a crying little girl in the dark eyes, being punished for absolutely everything she did, even if it wasn't of any harm. He sees the younger Nui.

" **DON'T YOU DARE EVER THREATEN ME AGAIN!** " she yells in the most hellish and scary voice a human could only imagine, ear deafening, like one you can only hear from the worst of nightmares. Tsumugu breathes in and out, afraid of Nui, and falls onto the ground.

Nui transforms back into her human form. There are a few tears in her face.

"I don't want to be a monster anymore..." she mumbles. Tsumugu looks into Nui's face.

"BUT YOU TURN ME INTO ONE IF YOU SAY ONE MORE WORD OUT OF YOUR DIRTY MOUTH!" Nui threatens. It's well visible Nui is hurt. After so much time, Tsumugu still hates her, for no reason other than her being a Life Fiber. She hasn't done anything to him when she came back from the dead. And he treats her like trash. Just like Ragyo's men did. Just like Ragyo did.

It's like a trauma coming back, and Nui doesn't know how to comprehend it anymore. Nui walks away crying to the next orb. Mikisugi tries to catch up to her.

At least it can't get any worse. Right?

... Nui enters one of the orbs by ripping it open and then forcing it to fly up to the Layer of the High Entity.

Mikisugi walks to Tsumugu while the soldiers catch up with their driver friend.

"Are you okay?" he asks careful. Tsumugu looks to the ground and nods.

"... yeah." he answers very quiet...

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Ryuko and Satsuki watch how several groups of Life Fibers run through the halls they are into. Both sisters sit for hours in this cold,

hopeless hell the Entity is, although the Colossus seem to care for them a bit by keeping fellow Life Fibers away from them.

From one door near the side, a copy of the High Entity appears with Life Fiber humanoids that look far more humanoid and healthier than their other companions. Maybe they serve as some sort of guardians for Entity copies? The copy approaches them.

"... rise up." it orders. Satsuki and Ryuko move on, if only very resistant. On the back of the guardian's heads, cape like forms hang down up to their knees.

"Stay calm, Ryuko. I know you are unwell." Senketsu mentions.

"I don't know how the others are... or Nui. We gotta get out of here soon."

"With such large abnormalities, I doubt we can simply get out of here." Satsuki mentions. Ryuko and Senketsu look around while they are brought away with Satsuki. In one hall, they find several holes in which Life Fibers are produced slowly. There are no organs in them however. A calm, sublime melody can be heard. Satsuki keeps her spear safe in her hand, but doesn't attack anyone. It would mean the death of both of them anyway, they can't get out of here just like that.

A few more halls later, they find gigantic stairs. Boulder like thick Fibers hang on others layer wise and create actual stairs that way. When the copy gets closer to the stairs, they really transform into such, with which both sisters and the Being walk up the Layer. They eventually arrive in a large hall where Life Fibers seem to reside and guard the throne room. Senketsu notices that there is a gate that leads into a dark room. Ryuko takes a closer look, the Life Fibers allow her to move around freely.

"What is that?" Ryuko asks the Entity which follows her to the gate.

"... ah... these are the dark halls... ours that die... come back home... to live together in their memories with us... and some, that live, come back to speak up to us... whenever they wish... such as our enforcer."

So this would explain how Ichiro was able to visit the High Entity all the time. He had his actual body in the Neo-REVOCS HQ and a second form that was staying at the Layer, and one could now assume that by closing his eyes, he can basically switch control and move on with his other body. The body was likely created in the dark halls therefore. The dark halls seem to be integrated with the Layer therefore. All memories are saved there. Everything is saved. Then what happened before with Nui must have been her going so angry that she got her Life Fiber Body with her as well.

Ryuko always was in the Layer of the High Entity back in the Neo-REVOCS HQ. Ichiro stitched her mind to make sure she lands with her second body in an foreign realm...

"... how big are those halls?" Ryuko asks, remembering the Layer can't be as big as the halls.

"... infinitely... Matoi... they do not end."

"Infinitely?"

"What you see is an entrance... into a world, bigger than anything this universe... has to offer." the copy answers and walks back to the entrance.

"You seeing this, Satsuki?"

"Yes."

"I was there, back in the Neo-REVOCS HQ. I... you can't imagine how big the halls are. And to know they are more or less reachable via a simple door. Dad... must be there..." she mumbles.

"He's... there?"

"Yeah. I saw him. I spoke with him."

Satsuki nods slowly wistful.

"Follow me..." the Entity orders. Ryuko walks to one of the doors while the Life Fibers watch her excited. Carefully, she holds her hand onto one of those portals.

A Life Fiber Being appears there, holding the hand back, as if both would touch a mirror. It's Ryuko in her Life Fiber Form, looking at her real me. When Ryuko moves her head to the left, the Life Fiber Being does the same.

"You've always been a part of us... and once your physical form is gone... you will return... and wander in the halls with all the memories... you gathered in your life..."

"... wow..."

"How does this work?" Satsuki asks curious.

"Such a question... cannot be answered, not even by us, as we do not know it either, young Kiryuin." the copy answers. How the Layer is connected with the dark halls will stay a question forever, most likely, but knowing that they are connected gives insight into it.

"Come..." the Entity orders calm but precise. Ryuko and Satsuki follow it. When it reaches another large gate, they can find a round hall with an giant pillar in the middle. There are hallways on the left and right with stairs that seem to lead up to another room. Between those stairs is another large gate. On the walls, Ryuko notices human sized orange and white Life Fiber threads. The entire hall and the hallways look much more cleaner and well structured than anything else they saw so far - a sign that they must have arrived now. Ryuko and Satsuki walk up the stairs with the copy and notice additional rooms, but only one seems to be interesting right now.

"Soon... she shall be here..." the Entity continues. The Life Fibers in the wall open a gate. Satsuki enters it first.

This is the throne room. It's a large hall without any singing, without any melodies except for a few sounds that come from the descent on the left side, about sixty feet away from the throne on the right side, decorated with thousands of tiny little artifact forms that form a surreal yet somewhat beautiful pattern around the walls behind and above it, with single white threads inside them that shine slightly, a bit like crystals. There is also a large window like wall that, on the other side, must appear like a normal wall however. This window is above the descent and can therefore not be reached on foot.

Four copies stand in the room and slowly turn to Ryuko and Satsuki, but the original Entity isn't here. A fifth copy appears through another door - thanks to it's different head form, it's Hinata. Hinata and the other copies observe Ryuko and Satsuki. The copy that brought Ryuko and Satsuki to the room brings them into the center of the hall.

"... so how many of you exist?" Senketsu asks as he watches the copies. Calm, both copies watch the sisters. Satsuki observes how one of them lose Life Fibers and slowly vanish - it seems as if the copy dies. Out of the window, they can also see the zeppelin fighting off the orbs of the Layer. One of the orbs hits the zeppelin's hangar and lands into it.

"... oh no..." he mumbles worried.

...

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(AN: Now listen to "Titanfall 2 OST - Frontier Defense Final Wave 02. Yeah, Titanfall 2 is just a pretty good game with good soundtrack. lol)

Inside the zeppelin, Nudist Beach soldiers fend off attacking Life Fibers that try to take down the zeppelin. Out of the orb, hostile monsters spawn, including a large, crab like five meter tall monster with stings on the back and a large head. Takarada's soldiers fire with their Coin Rifles on the monster, Nudist Beach uses Needle Rifles. Killing the monster is incredibly difficult without scissor blades. Sanageyama, Gamagoori and Nonon run to an overpass and watch how it causes destruction even though it's taking damage. The minions cause more trouble however since they actively attack the Nudist Beach units. Gamagoori carefully puts down Nonon while Sanageyama drags his sword to attack.

"Get into cover, Jakuzure. Sanageyama and me will deal with them." Gamagoori orders and transforms into his Protector Regalia - heavily armored, he jumps down to confront the Crab Fiber, especially since his height is increasing with his regalia. However that works. Let's just go with it. Nonon however doesn't accept being pushed away because of a "little" flesh wound, hence why she runs to the weapon chamber.

"... I might be hurt..." she mumbles and searches for a few instruments infused with Life Fibers. With those, she walks back to the overpass.

"... but if these idiots think they can have the lead on **MY STAGE**, they've messed with the wrong musician!" she screams to the Life Fibers and starts playing music. The hostile Life Fibers are distracted by that move, and this helps Sanageyama, Gamagoori and the rest in combat.

With his fist, Gamagoori performs slow but incredibly powerful attacks, hitting the Crab Fiber, and each time he hits, it's hate for Gamagoori grows more and more. With it's stings it tries to pierce his armor, but whenever it does hit, it screams up at him, as each hit feels like it would hit hard stone.

The hangar gates are open, and instead of killing the monster, Gamagoori tries to push it out of the hangar, and the more he hits it,

the better the chances are on defeating it like that. Some of the Nudist Beach soldiers realize Nonon's tactique and how well it works against the Life Fibers. Even though she can't play as effective as usual due to her wounds, they start placing microphones around her with which the music is played in the entire ship. Gamagoori prepares an uppercut, gets hit by a sting, but continues with the attack and hits the monster that now falls onto the edge of the hangar, trying to stay in it with another sting.

"WEAK, SO WEAK!" he yells and kicks into it's face, causing it to fall down and hundreds of meter into Tokyo as it screams scared. Gamagoori walks to the orb and rips it out of the ground of the ship, just to throw it out as well. The Life Fibers however continue, they aren't afraid of the tall man and his companions - although Nonon's music does an excellent job, still. Sanageyama and a few additional melee fighters attack the remaining monsters, but more orbs are about to land in the hangar. This was just the start...

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More and more Entities gather around in the throne room and watch Ryuko and Satsuki. They both surround the two sisters, but there is still no sign of the High Entity.

"Stay calm, Ryuko. They apparently just want to talk." Satsuki thinks. Ryuko nods.

"... and it better stays that will, for their sake."

Hinata walks to Ryuko and Satsuki.

"Matoi... and Kiryuin... we finally meet each other... face... to... face." Hinata greets Satsuki curiously and musters her while keeping distance respectfully.

"... so it is you... just like the High Entity said..." Hinata realizes. Satsuki doesn't quite understand what he means.

"What? Just like the High Entity said?"

"It spoke... about you... many times..."

"Hrmpf." Satsuki grumbles. What should that thing know about her? It annoys her - after all, it never even once saw Satsuki and know it seems to pretend it knows everything about her.

"And you, Matoi... you seem to be well... good... to see that."

"... the pleasure is all on my side, Hinata." Ryuko answers, although she still is unsure whether she can trust him or not. Still: so far, he was rather decent.

Slowly, Ryuko and Satsuki notice how the copies of the Entity transform. Something must happen with their heads. It seems as if they reveal their faces to them - Ryuko notices for example one of the copies having a pyramid as head. The copy that led them to the throne room doesn't even have a head at all, it's headless! And Hinata?

Hinata reminisces only distantly of something one can call human - not a real human, not at all, the head proportions are too horrible for that, but from all the Entities around them, he still looks the best - or least horrifying. His head is bleak and pointed, with several edges, the mouth is destroyed, and out of his eyes, a black liquid leaves his "cheeks".

"Tell me, "Hinata"... what does this Entity know about me? Speak." Satsuki orders resolve. Hinata turns to the zeppelin.

"It knows... all about you... as if it was always... there..."

"Always there?"

"Always... there... always... there..."

"Hinata, just get straight to the point, please." Ryuko mentions.
Some of the Entities listen up as they can hear clear, precise steps.
Satsuki turns to Hinata, both sisters watch him and the zeppelin now.

(AN: I HEAVILY (!) recommend you listen to Blumenkranz now. The original Blumenkranz.)

"Forgive my choice of words, Matoi... but I fear I am not allowed to... intervene in this..."

"But you "intervened" other things already. Why not now?"

"And yet... it is something I cannot influence... not this time... again... forgive me."

"Speak, Hinata! I want to know what Ryuko and me do here! I want to know what this Entity wants from us and more importantly, I want to know what this whore of monstrosity wants and how it dares itself to claim that it knows everything about me!" Satsuki says aggressive.

Suddenly, they can hear a well known chuckle.

And the click of a heel on hard ground.

"Oh... oh Satsuki..."

Satsuki's and Ryuko's blood freezes, Senketsu's eye grows.

"... is that how you speak about your mother?" the voice asks curious while chuckling. The Entities bow, some dissolve, others walk away out of fear. Satsuki turns with her head to her side, very slowly.

"Is that... how you greet everyone you haven't seen in such a long time...?"

Satsuki looks to the hull of the High Entity. White shoes can be seen under the hull. Satsuki's heart stops for a moment.

"... this can't be."

"... what a shame. I remember I raised you to behave better..." the High Entity smiles with a slightly amused, sinister smile.

This is not just the High Entity.

"... Mother..."

This is Ragyo Kiryuin.

And she is alive. Still. After all this time.

Hinata dissolves, and so do all the other Entity copies.

Beyond all the Life Fibers, all the destruction, the Doppelgänger, beyond the Life Fiber Sickness and all the hallucinations... you still find Ragyo Kiryuin.

With that, the question whether she found immortality or not has been answered. Ryuko falls onto her knee due to the shock. In the background, Life Fibers hum Ragyo's song of the Blumenkranz in calm voices.

Ragyo slowly approaches her daughter and examines her. Satsuki is too shocked to move any longer. She just looks up to Ragyo.

Ragyo... this isn't the mother Satsuki remembers. Ryuko does however - it's her younger version. Young, more harmless and friendlier, back when Soichiro was around her for most of the time, but before she killed Izumi and got corrupted. Ragyo's entire body is covered by Life Fibers that move very fast around her and disguise her otherwise naked body. Her wish has been fulfilled as well - she's worn by clothes. Living clothes that feast on her. Her right arm is no longer human - instead, shredded Life Fibers hang on it, which likely can form however as she pleases. The left hand is still human.

(AN: =) *laughs evil*)

"... but how?" Satsuki asks, not being able to comprehend what is going on here. Ragyo touches Satsuki's cheek with her human hand.

"... finally... I can feel your body with my own hands... and see it."

"... but how... is that possible?" Satsuki mumbles in disbelief. Her world is breaking apart.

"You truly are a beautiful woman, my dear." Ragyo mentions proud if sinister.

"HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE!?" Satsuki screams desperate. Ragyo can't help but chuckle slightly.

"... I saw you dying, mom! I saw it with my own eyes! Several times! How, like, wha-, what the..." Ryuko mumbles surprised.

"Oh, did you? And you believe that just because you die... everything is over?" Ragyo asks curious and walks to Ryuko who's kneeling in front of her.

"... I was in your memory..."

"Oh. Mhm... then I assume you saw your grandmother, yes? And what kind of woman she was? Ohh... and how she ended?"

"... yes..."

"From the very moment I found the primordial Life Fiber under the manor, many years ago, the Life Fibers... accepted me. Unlike my former family. Unlike the one I served before - my mother, and her corporation. When the High Entity accepted me, it fulfilled my wish... immortality."

"But how? How can you stand here?! You ripped your fucking heart out!"

"And this heart, including it's body, died indeed - yes, it was gone. But me? No. No, Ryuko... the person you see here... is truly your

mother. What you saw... was... a copy... A copy I created, in exchange for my body." Ragyo answers and raises her Life Fiber arm. The Entity hull slowly moves away and reveals red Life Fibers on Ragyo's entire right body, except for her face and neck. Her leg, her torso, her shoulder... they all are being feasted on by Life Fibers.

"I existed twice. There is my human me... the person standing in front of you... and my hybrid form. To create this hybrid, the High Entity required a human component. I accepted the love of the Life Fibers.

They ripped a part of my body away to feast on it, as you can see. It should have killed me.

But the mercy of the Entity saved my life. When it allowed me to be worn by clothes truly, I was able to live on... and ruled about my hybrid form until it found its death in space, after you and your sister destroyed Shinra Koketsu. I truly could have received a Life Fiber form... but that was not my intention... my intention was to be worn by clothing, to pay for the sins of humanity, to pay for my sins... instead of becoming clothing.

And the moment I killed my mother - that was the moment my hybrid form truly, well, activated, while I safely slept in the Layer of the Entity, ruling over my body in safety, knowing nothing can hurt me truly. And yet... you and Satsuki never became what I intended both of you to become... and I especially mourn for Satsuki, even today, even right now. But this will end soon." Ragyo explains.

So this is how she survived. She never really died. She used her second body - a hybrid form, just like Ryuko with her second body, or Nui, or Ichiro, or all the other Life Fibers. And since Ragyo always wanted to be worn by clothes, she did not seek for a pure Life Fiber form like Nui, but a hybrid so that she could wear Kamuis. The stings that pierced Ragyo briefly before Izumi must have been the Nexus Fibers that activated the regeneration abilities of her body. And the children that were raised inside her body apparently couldn't grow

Life Fiber cells at all - this would prove that a Life Fiber hybrid cannot bring Life Fiber children onto the world, if wished.

"... fuck..." Ryuko mumbles shocked and shakes her head in disbelief.

"Oh, do not despair, Ryuko." Ragyo smiles and turns her head to Satsuki who's mind is shattered.

"... so it was you with the Life Fiber Sickness?" Ryuko asks. Ragyo raises Satsuki's chin slightly and looks back to Ryuko. Ragyo nods slowly.

"Mhm, indeed. The COVERS were good and useful and the plan was perfect... or so I thought... but unexpectedly, Shinra Koketsu failed due to you, your sister and the little creation I brought upon the world... and since neither of you three were perfect at all. The Life Fiber Sickness... is my safety measure for the worst case." Ragyo continues and looks into Satsuki's face.

"And yes, Satsuki... all these hallucinations... all these nightmares... were due to me. I was never gone. I was always with you. I wouldn't leave you alone like that..." she smiles calm but strangely enough, somewhat caring for Satsuki.

"So this is why you smiled, hm? You knew this wasn't the end for you. It was just the beginning. Just a little obstacle for whatever your sick plan now is."

"Precisely."

"Then how the hell can you be the High damn Entity!?" Ryuko continues.

"The High Entity grew old... became weak. When you changed my plans, I woke up after my years long sleep, and realized that the current Entity was... withering, like a flower. We Kiryuins serve it and the Life Fibers for thousands of years. And I was chosen to be it's

successor. After the death of my hybrid form, it died as well. And this is how I became what I am now. Now, after all these years... I am at home, to finish what I started. Yet, instead of destroying this planet, that could be so beautiful... I want to rescue it. Give it a new chance... one in which perfect life forms live in harmony, until they can expand. And I will have a family that will walk on the red Earth - and when the time comes, the manor will be built again, and the children will walk on the green garden of the Kiryuin palace.

And my dream will be true, finally." Ragyo smiles, desiring for her ultimate goal.

"... and you banished Nui too?"

"... who?"

"... you bitch."

"Oh... yes... I remember. Apologies. I haven't used that name in such a long time."

"Do you even know what the fuck you did to her?!"

"What? A Life Fiber? That came onto this world to serve my wishes and plans and ultimately failed?"

"How do you even dare to talk about her like that, huh!?" Ryuko asks insulted and tries to punch Ragyo, but Ragyo reacts by raising her arm to the left, forcing Life Fibers out of the ground that drag Ryuko forcefully on the ground again.

"She failed. Was imperfect - and I did not expect that to happen. Nothing... but a little girl without any emotions..."

"Without any emotions?! SHE HAD THEM! AND YOU TOOK THEM AWAY!"

"And you defend her? Ryuko... didn't she killed your father?"

"She did! But I don't care anymore! It happened, fuck it! Dad doesn't mind that much either from the looks of it!" Ryuko answers, causing Ragyo to chuckle amused.

"Amusing."

"I swear, if she gets here and finds you, you'll experience a hell no one can imagine in the slightest, that ain't a thread, that's a promise!"

"I killed her when she was about to kill her Doppelgänger on Okishima, Ryuko. And it showed me once more that I was right. A stupid, little girl."

"Right, I can lie to myself as well. You..."

Ragyo suddenly materializes Nui's yellow bloody bow and throws it to Ryuko.

The blood has dried out. Ryuko slowly holds her hand on the bow. Her anger slowly turns into disbelief and sadness. Some yellow hair streaks are still visible. The big sister fights with the tears - it really is the bow...

"... no... no..."

"Mmm... she was nothing but living clothes, dear daughter."

"No, she..."

"Don't feel too bad. After all... I could always create a new one, if I wanted to. Or... well, you do it yourself." Ragyo smiles provoking.

"FUCK YOU!"

Ragyo walks to the descent and looks outside the window. Ryuko mourns over her apparently dead sister.

...

(AN: Listen to "Blumenkranz Orchestra" on YouTube by Mike Reed IX.)

In the lower parts of the Layer, Life Fibers crawl around, some of them even enter orbs to get ready for the battle. One of the orbs dock into the Layer... but the door doesn't open. Curiously, the monsters crawl to the orb. One of them tries to open it.

But they realize that it's Nui who's looking at them with tears in her face and an ice cold face expression. They used to be her "family", until it turned out everyone is against her. There is no family. There are no friends. There never was - until Ryuko came. And based on the singing of the Life Fibers, she's here, at the throne room. The entire Layer speaks about them, after all.

Nui leaves the orb and keeps her rifle in her pocket by shrinking it. With fists and an aggressive body stance, she walks down the path to the throne room, and not a single Life Fiber dares to walk into her way.

However, some of the Entity's copies notice her appearance and appear in the air. One of them walks with Nui as she aims for the throne room.

"You... dare to walk on these holy... paths?"

Nui doesn't answer. Her corruption behind her forces the Life Fibers to retreat, as the ground turns from red into yellow. The Entity is shocked by that gaze. In front of Nui, the doors to the halls open, without her coming even close to them. Not a single Life Fiber cell in the Layer wants to draw her wrath on them - the Entity begs to differ however.

"Chosen by the Life Fibers." she mumbles with a broken heart.

The Entity tries to stop Nui, yet she continues. In one hall, she finds the Colossus that protected Ryuko and Satsuki who runs away

slowly as he sees Nui, until he clashes with a wall and, frightened by her, looks away.

"... destined to greatness..."

"You will not reach these halls with any chance of survival, Harime..." another Entity threatens. The other copies retreat into the halls to prepare resistance.

"... chosen by the Entity..."

Nui walks up a few stairs and gets closer to the throne room, she doesn't have to visit many more rooms. Nui keeps her hand in one of her pockets and slowly drags out an item which she holds tight.

"To fulfill their will..."

Behind her, additional Life Fibers follow her, curious to see what she does, even though they all are heavily afraid. How can the Entity copy show such braveness?

"To destroy those who defy it..."

Above her, she can hear a Colossus stomping around, and several other tall Life Fibers that mobilize for an attack. Nui doesn't show any anxiety anymore - only braveness, hatred, sadness. She shows emotions - because her family taught her that it's okay to have them.

"That is my destiny."

Nui reaches the rooms near the throne room. The first one is empty. A large gate in front of her keeps her away from the room that leads to Ryuko and Satsuki. The Entity copy walks in front of Nui.

"What is your wish, Harime!?" the copy asks angry. Nui opens the gate.

She's greeted by dozens of Life Fibers of all kinds - Hunters, a Colossus and a Tower Fiber, Crab Fibers, humanoids... everything the High Entity has to offer... and additional Entity copies that summon white needles above them. Whoever resists will die, and who retreats, will live.

But these certainly want to die.

Nui bites her teeth together, closes her eyes as more tears leave them and then opens them with fury.

"I want my family."

Suddenly, Nui enhances the scissor blades and tears the Entity copy next to her into several parts, which dissolves with an disbelieving face expression. The other copies start attacking Nui with the needles which she however destroys easily with the scissor blades. The Colossus and a Tower Fiber retreat, seeing how she fends off the attacks of the Entities. The Crab Fiber tries to pierce Nui but misses, Nui uses that chance to cut off it's stings - the monster screams in pain.

"KILL HER!" one of the Entity copies order. Nui turns her head to the Entity copy and jumps at it. In an blink of an eye, Nui cuts the copy into two halves, creating a white light inside the wounds that slowly dissolve the Life Fiber lord. More Life Fibers try to attack Nui, but thanks to her reflexes, she can quickly react and grab one with her hand, throwing it against the others. Only once her fury has found it's end, her power will be gone. With screams of fury, the former Grand Couturier of REVOCS destroys one group of Life Fibers after another, who are trying to protect Ragyo - but everyone falls one by one.

Even the wounds she catches are sustained easily despite the fact the Life Fibers can harm her - she doesn't care anymore. Everyone will die. They seriously dared to take Ryuko and Satsuki as prisoners.

The scissor blades rip apart walls and reveal new rooms, in which the inhabitant Life Fibers only watch in fear. The Tower Fiber and the Colossus walk to the very end of the room in fear, hoping they would be spared.

The Entity copies can only watch how Nui eliminates their henchmen, and once that is done, Nui turns to the copies and kills the rest of them, until she severely damages one that falls onto the ground. Only very few Life Fibers mourn, most of them are incredibly angry at her, but they don't dare to attack her.

The Tower Fiber and the Colossus watch Nui scared as they both stand next to each other. Nui walks to them, holding the scissor blades ready.

"... don't... don't... don't..." they sing afraid of her. Nui rams the blades into the ground and walks to the Colossus that starts whimpering scared.

"... no... no... no..." it mourns with it's large mouth.

"Go. And take all of those that can feel like you do with you. And gather in the city, in the largest park you can find. I won't hurt you." she orders. Slowly, the Colossus and the Tower Fiber follow her order and carefully walk away - it's more and more obvious that with Hoomaru's sacrifice, Nui got a part of her old, empathizing personality back. Again: those who do not attack her, are allowed to live. She won't kill everyone. Only those who deserve it, or really resist her.

"... thank you... thank you... thank you..." the Tower Fiber sings grateful yet still afraid and leaves with his big friend. A copy lays on the ground and looks up to Nui as she approaches it. She grabs both scissor blades again.

"... you... killed them all... you truly... are one of us."

Nui looks down to the Entity.

"Where are they?"

"... in the... throne room..." the copy answers. Nui knocks it out with the scissor blades and moves on. A few more Life Fibers follow the Tower Fiber and the Colossus.

"GO! ALL OF YOU! THE ENTITY ONLY USES YOU!" she screams, still having a few tears in her face, even somewhat cathartic, seeing all the dead Life Fibers on the ground. Nui moves on...

...

Ragyo turns back to Ryuko and Satsuki. Ryuko is crying for her dead sister. Nothing is left of her. Just her yellow bow.

"Now... enough of the meaningless words... this isn't what you are here for, after all. You are here for something more sublime. Satsuki... you are here for that." Ragyo explains. Satsuki, furiously, looks up to her.

"... and what did your sick mind came up with? What will you do?! Isn't destroying Earth good enough for you anymore, after everything you did!?" Satsuki asks angry.

"How wondrous of you to ask that. It's remarkable, considering it's in your morbid interest, after everything you personally experienced." Ragyo answers and reaches her human hand, yet Satsuki denies and stands up on her own.

"You and me, Satsuki... we both have similarities, we always did... and Ryuko understands that well. Tell her, Ryuko..." Ragyo smiles.

"... go... fuck yourself."

Ragyo chuckles.

"Well... your sister seems to be in a rather doubtful mood. Satsuki... I connect the name "Izumi Kiryuin" with pure hatred... and

bloodlust. Ever since I was a little child, like you, I was terrorized - day for day.

And one day, I realized how mighty the Life Fibers are.. and that I had a destiny. We Kiryuins... have a destiny. We serve them, for we are Life Fibers, truly. And with me, Life Fibers will reach the next step in evolution. Evolution that was long overdue, and that, thanks to the plan of the former Entity, was delayed by years, when I could have done everything much faster.

Life Fibers will spread through the universe and feast on it - you and me, however... will prepare the foundation. We always should have, Satsuki - and with this divine species dying, it's our very goal to make sure today will not be the end of it. You, dearest Satsuki... will help me."

"... what... are you talking about, you fool!?" Satsuki asks confused.

"I understand your wrath, I truly do, Satsuki. The wrath you feel is the wrath I used to feel towards my mother. You are what I used to be. A furious daughter, seeking to end the many nightmares that haunt her.

And I want to offer you this end - I do not wish you to succumb to corruption as I did. My time for absolution... is far over - and do not think I am not aware, or do not care about the things I did.

Everything I did, I am grateful for, and at the same time, I feel remorse. Remorse for those that died through my hands or actions. All I know is that these sacrifices will result in a better, beautiful world, on which I, and hopefully you, my daughter, can wander on.

You could ram your weapon into my body and kill me - but it's not only unnecessary, but also not in your interest, for your health, and for your future. No, Satsuki... you can skip these steps." Ragyo explains. It's surprising to hear that Ragyo apparently feels remorse and a certain amount of empathy, unlike her hybrid form, which once more confirms this is the true Ragyo, with a human heart, with feelings, with own memories and with own fears. Somewhere in that speech, there surely is the fear of death, still. There must be.

"You... want me to turn into you!?"

"You already are like me, Satsuki. Young, angry and bloodlusty, but also protective of those you love, and you seek revenge for what I did to you and your sister... you want all of this to end - you want me to pay." Ragyo continues.

"Satsuki would never do such a thing, Ragyo!" Ryuko yells angry and runs towards Ragyo once more, almost hitting her with the black arm, yet Ragyo reacts quickly enough, rams her fist into Ryuko's face and causes her to fall down.

"You are not allowed to speak, hybrid." Ragyo threatens cold and looks down to her daughter.

"... you may be my daughter, but you speak only when I allow it for you. Otherwise you will end exactly like the abominal imperfection you call your "little sister"." Ragyo continues. A gate opens to the left and steps ring up.

"Mama?" Ragyo can hear. Ryuko, Satsuki and Ragyo react surprised, hearing Nui at the entrance to the throne room - especially Ragyo who can't believe this. Nui sees her.

Why does mama wear the hull of an Entity?

Why does mama threaten Ryuko to kill her?

Why is mama alive, even though she shouldn't be?

Why... is mama...

Ragyo slowly approaches Nui.

"How is that possible?" Ragyo asks perplexed.

"... mama... why... are you wearing that... why..."

"How are you still alive?" she wonders even more. She literally just killed Nui hours ago, and now she stands here?

Ryuko slowly stands up and notices the bloody bow next to Ragyo. Nui shakes her head in disbelief.

"... I thought you were dead... but... mama... why..."

"Nui..." Ryuko mumbles with a heavy heart and holds up the bow.

"... it was her. Mom... killed you. Mom took you everything. And now she wants to hurt all of us... this... isn't your mom... this is just a human..." Ryuko mumbles sad. Nui doesn't know what to say.

Mama lives. But Mama hurt her. She always did. Nui looks up to what she thinks to be her mother.

"But... all the things... I did for you... wasn't... wasn't it enough?"

"..."

"... aren't you proud of me... mama?" Nui mumbles, trying to ignore what Ryuko says, but everything comes up now.

"I'm not your mother, Harime. I'm your creator. And you are my tool. You shouldn't be here. You should be in the halls... and yet you still dare to approach me once more - after all the failures you summoned upon me." Ragyo threatens and walks closer to Nui.

"... mama..."

Nui slowly realizes what kind of person Ragyo really is.

Mama hurt her. She always did.

Mama killed Nui. Mentally and physically.

Mama banished Nui.

Mama created the Doppelgänger.

Mama hurts her sisters.

... mama really is just a human.

The most evil of them.

The most evil of them.

The most evil of them.

Mama.

Mama.

Mama.

...

Lady Ragyo.

Lady Ragyo.

Lady Ragyo.

...

Human.

Human.

Human.

...

"... you... aren't my mother. You... never were... my mother..." she realizes quietly, her eyes glassy. Ragyo turns with her back to Nui and looks to Satsuki.

"Now, Satsuki. Answer me." Ragyo orders and walks to Ryuko. She summons white needles out of the walls.

"Or I will kill her." Ragyo threatens Satsuki with killing Ryuko. She knows Satsuki wouldn't want Ryuko to be harmed. Nui drops the scissor blades, not believing what she sees. Not believing how she was so deceived.

"... you won't harm Ryuko." Satsuki answers against her will and keeps her spear ready.

"Then do... what I say... and approach the descent." Ragyo orders, feeling the victory, even embracing it already - until suddenly, Satsuki attacks Ragyo with the spear. Ragyo avoids the attack and hits Satsuki's face with the Life Fiber hand.

(AN: Lastly, listen to "KILL la KILL IF OST - Theme of Ragyo - Extended. ;))

Life Fibers from the ground rise up to attack Ryuko, attempting to crush her - however, with her black arms, she can save herself from certain death. Satsuki defends herself as more Life Fibers from the ground attack her to defend their highness, while Ragyo takes a few steps back, summoning more Life Fibers. These Life Fibers grab Ryuko's back, sling around her body and drag her away and out of the room, however, Ryuko is able to catch the scissor blades with her Life Fiber abilities by throwing strings at them - her, and the blades are launched into a different room.

"How naive of you." Ragyo mocks Satsuki - her head is not covered by Life Fibers, could she hit it and kill her like that? Somehow, she must be able to defeat her.

"You insane monster! I won't allow you to hurt either of my sisters!"

"Too late - you chose wrong." Ragyo answers and summons Life Fibers from the ground that drag Satsuki to the descent. The closer she comes to the hungry Life Fibers, the more aggressive they

become. Out of the walls, Life Fibers start singing a sinister, choir like melody with various voices. While the Life Fibers do launch Satsuki down to the descent, she rams her spear into the wall to save herself, although she is just a few meters from death away now. There is however the room below the throne room which she could climb up with the spear.

Ragyo approaches Nui and looks down to her.

"... all... just... a lie..." she mumbles. Ragyo touches Nui's chin.

"When Ryuko comforted you... you wished to no longer be clothing." Ragyo remembers and rams her arm into Nui's body.

"So be it.

Then die as human." Ragyo threatens and starts tearing Nui's body. Nui screams painful, coughs blood, Life Fibers leave her body as her skin seemingly breaks.

"GRRRAAAAAAARRRRRGHHHH"

"If this truly is what you wanted, then fail as Life Fiber and as human, Harime!" Ragyo continues tearing until suddenly, an orange light leaves the wounds all over her body - Life Fibers slowly move out of the wounds, trying to hold onto Nui, but they are dragged away by Ragyo as she furiously rips her arm out. With that, a Life Fiber Being falls out of her body. Nui mourns painful, with the pain being beyond the imagination of a human, only a pain Life Fibers could endure properly - more tears leave Nui's eyes as she looks up into Ragyo's cold, but somehow still empathic eyes. Almost as if she rather would want to give Nui absolution in death.

Nui falls onto the ground, with her face on the Life Fibers that try to catch up on her. Nui looks up to the Life Fiber Being that copies her movement.

It's Nui herself, but her Life Fiber form. Both look into each others eyes. Nui's sad yet empathic ones, and the cold but protective ones of the Life Fiber form that hums sad and worried for it's host, until it gently touches her cheek to catch up the tear that leaves her eye.

"... now... you... are... mature..." the Being mumbles sad.

"... no... don't leave me..." Nui begs. Ragyo rams white Life Fiber needles into Nui's Life Fiber form - a scream rings out of it, and an explosion ends the Life Fiber Form truly. One of the needles hit Nui's cheek and rip it open partially...

... inside, flesh is visible. Flesh of a human. The explosion causes horrible pain in Nui and renders her unconscious, with her Fiber rifle falling out of the pocket and growing in size again.

Ragyo turns around to leave Nui and eliminate her daughter Satsuki who's in the room below. There, she finds Satsuki, armed with her spear, observing how Ragyo slowly hovers down to her, calm and gentle.

"You truly are a Kiryuin, Satsuki - we all are fighters. And you are, maybe not the most intelligent, but the bravest of them. I'm proud of you... and yet, if you believe you could end my life... then try to do so, but you will fail, daughter."

"You won't get away with this alive, even if I lose my own life as well - I'll take you with me."

"So brave. Admirable." Ragyo chuckles.

Both opponents stand in front of each other, a few meters away. The Life Fibers sing louder and more horrifying as mother and daughter watch each other.

They watch them.

They always did - and when the time comes, they corrupt them.

They always did...

AN: :) :DDDDDDDD

Leave a review. Take your time writing it. XD Lots of stuff happened now. Mama Ragyo happened, Tsumugu happened, the battle on the zeppelin happened, the Life Fiber Sickness happened... :) See ya soon, and thanks for reading again. I'm looking forward to your reactions!

The Things I Did For You 3-3

AN: Thanks for waiting so patiently for the next chapter! I've been very busy with school and all but now the chapter is finally done. And it'll be a rollercoaster. Enjoy. And leave me a review as always, I'd be very happy about it!

Life Fibers and snow fall from the sky. Blood still flows out of Ichiro's destroyed left eye socket, and the drops stained his coat. With his right eye, he observes the battle of Tokyo - around him, his Couturiers attempt to create a superweapon out of the Life Fibers at Honnouji. The Entity will handle the humans that try to take up on it, after all. He can see however a few units preparing boats near the port of Tokyo - of which some of them get equipped with weaponry. The zeppelin is burning.

...

In the meantime, Maiko Ogure looks via binoculars at the Honnouji Academy, while showing her tongue, as she patiently observes the Life Fibers.

"Raise the gun." she yells into the tank.

"You heard that, Mako!? Raise the gun!" Mataro yells.

The turret rises.

"Higher."

"More, Mako!"

"Higher."

"Don't stop!"

"... alright, that's enough, aha! Now let's see what this baby has to offer!" Maiko chuckles.

One of the Couturiers climb up to Ichiro and speak to him.

"Director, some of our allies messaged us - the Couturiers at the port have been eliminated."

"That was to expect, but it's not a huge loss. All we need is a little more time and then, we turn this planet into what it always was supposed to be. The Entity will deal with them." Ichiro answers, however, he then hears his men screaming. When he looks down to them, he notices that they are running away, and looking up a little further, a large projectile flies into the wall next to him. Kilometres away from him is the tank Maiko stole from REVOCS.

"Director, this seems to be this girl we've captured."

"Should have killed that brat..." he mumbles angry.

...

(AN: Listen to "Kill La Kill IF Theme of Ragyo Final Round" on YouTube. There is a ten minute long track uploaded by "UZXCrimsonAvenger", that's the one I mean.)

Ragyo chuckles entertained as she watches her oldest daughter Satsuki trying to harm the mother with her spear. It appears as if Ragyo knows every step Satsuki attempts to do, and this renders the battle against her incredibly difficult. Ragyo does not even try to materialize a weapon yet - with simple steps, barely human due to how fast they are, she avoids every attack. When Satsuki tries to perform an overhead attack, Ragyo grabs her weapon with the Life Fiber arm. The weapon cuts through the arm partially, but only slowly, and it doesn't really seem to be effective. She however cannot pull out the spear again.

"You are trying to avoid the inavoidable, child." Ragyo smiles and touches Satsuki's cheek gently as she tries to pull out the weapon. Life Fibers crawl near her.

"How can such a young woman be so beautiful...? Astonishing." she asks proud. Satsuki pulls out the spear, attempting to hit Ragyo, yet she moves away quickly.

"How dare you try to come back years after your loss, thinking you could defeat ME?" she yells angry.

"We both are indeed persistent, aren't we? You and me, we do not give up just because we fall once, now do we? I think we Kiryuins are destined to battle our own kind eternally. Look at yourself, Satsuki."

Satsuki misses Ragyo.

"Despite my honest and genuine promises to give you everything you could ask for - a family and a caring mother - you'd rather deny my offer and doom your sister to death."

"What are you trying to do? Nurture the hatred I feel for you?! You do not need to kill her for that, I am at my limit already!"

Ragyo punches Satsuki's face.

"Such a shame to hurt you. I used to believe you were nothing but a failure, after all, my little Life Fiber experiments did not work on you - but now, I believe that you are everything but that. Truly, I do believe you can be better than what the two abominations above us have become. What is a sinner, if he becomes the sin?" she asks and pushes Satsuki away as she tries to hit her again.

"Is a sinner that became the sin still a sinner, or the one who judges those who have sinned, as he tru?"

Suddenly, hallucinations of Ragyo appear in Satsuki's mind and blur her sight, as it makes it hard for her to attack the actual Ragyo.

"Should humanity turn into a sin at this point? What would be left for the family I have found here, if I were to turn everything into clothing? Creating Ryuko and Harime was a mistake - a mistake I realized when you took me down, years ago. Now this Doppelgänger does the same mistake, and he will pay for that soon enough. Humanity shall not be sacrificed in its entire form, it shall be used as a means of improving Life Fibers."

The hallucinations try to touch Satsuki carefully, without actually attacking her. Satsuki tries to push forward.

"Yet, do questions like these matter at all? In the end, it all comes down to both of us. You will not become a Life Fiber, but you will become a part of the Life Fibers, as I did. And once you embrace and understand what warmth, what joy, what love they give you, you will regret that you resisted me." Ragyo continues. Satsuki notices the actual Ragyo due to her clothes and attacks her, ripping open a part of her robe, but it doesn't really harm the mother, and the clothes regenerate, if only slowly.

"I will turn you into one of them, Satsuki. You and me - we both will wander in this Garden of Eden we created ourselves, and it will be red, and it will be beautiful, and it will be stained no longer, and my children and your children will wander on it... and the Life Fibers will live."

"Ryuko told me you'd have a wish like that but this is not what you want and it is not what you will get! You don't want a family consisting of extraterrestrial cells of which only the fewest of them are capable of understanding what it's like to actually be alive, to be more than a Life Fiber! You want a family made out of human flesh - Ryuko, Nui, Father, me! But instead you accept the corruption that was spread upon you?!"

I don't even know if I could pity you or not! You hide your true self under clothing when there could be more, when there could be the thing I longed to have! And yet I cannot receive it any longer! These things are not your family! I am your family! We all are! But not these things!"

"How foolish of you, Satsuki." Ragyo smiles and walks a few steps back. She pulls out orange Life Fibers out of her arm and dissolves them. Satsuki is punched into the back of her head, and when she stands up, a hallucination of Ragyo smiles down to her.

"The hallucinations will imitate actual hits on your clean body until you will obey." Ragyo explains. Satsuki pierces the hallucination with her spear and dissolves it, the others take a few steps back, although they watch the young daughter curiously.

"I regret that I could not treat you well at all - you deserved much better, Satsuki. Give me the chance I denied when you were born." Ragyo pleads.

"You regret what you did!? Don't make me laugh now." Satsuki answers and attacks the hallucinations furthermore. More appear out of the walls.

Ragyo hears loud steps behind her and turns around, seeing Ryuko running towards her with the scissor blades. Ryuko tries to attack Ragyo, yet she simply keeps her Life Fiber arm between the two blades and moves the weapon up easily.

"Grrrrrrrr..."

"What are you trying to accomplish with this futile attempt, Ryuko?"

"I ain't gonna let you hurt Satsuki!"

"Oh but I am not going to hurt her at all, unless she forces me to. I am afraid that Satsuki is the one trying to make sure you are not hurt at all." Ragyo answers and punches the scissor blades to the left.

Ryuko tries to pull them up - in that moment, Ragyo pierces through Senketsu's eye. He moans painful and transforms into the normal suit again.

"No, Senketsu! You're gonna pa..."

Ragyo grabs the scissor blades and uses the dull side to slam Ryuko into a wall.

"Is this the powerful weapon Soichiro created? He did knew what he was doing, no doubt about that." Ragyo asks about Senketsu.

"Senketsu ain't just a weapon, he..."

"Oh yes, he is a friend. He is more human than most. Don't you worry, my dear... you both will soon meet each other properly, free from the flesh, the blood and the clothing, and be nothing but a distant memory, wandering around in the dark halls. Take it as a gift, Ryuko. Only those that came in contact with Life Fibers long enough are allowed to stay there... a gift not many can receive."

"The fuck is wrong with you!? You're out of your mind!"

"Out of my mind?"

"Everyone is gone, god damn it! There's nothing that would hurt you anymore and you sick idiot still continue trying to "take over" Earth for these monsters that only use you!" Ryuko yells and tries to grab the scissor blades Ragyo is using.

"Do the right thing for once and fuck off! Damn it, mom, I gotcha, I totally understand, fuck I've seen it myself! I've seen what you've been through!" Ryuko pleads. Ragyo slams the scissor blades against Ryuko, then attempts to cut her in half, but Ryuko avoids the attack and uses Senketsu's power to liquify. Through that, she can move under her mother and appear behind her.

"Leave the Life Fibers behind you! You'll destroy more than you could build up!"

"Far too late for this, Ryuko." Ragyo answers. There is a slight sign of pining to hear from Ragyo, as if she herself wishes it would have been different. Ryuko believes that behind the Life Fibers, there is the real, actual mother, that can still care for her children - the mother that stood human, despite all of her alien components.

At the very least, hope is still there.

Senketsu forms Ryuko's arms into large needle like weapons with which they can defend themselves from Ragyo's scissor blade attacks. One of the black needles hits Ragyo's upper robe, slashing it open and revealing Ragyo's human body and the skin hidden under the Life Fibers. And yet, Ragyo stays unimpressed.

"Your sister Satsuki will be grateful. Humanity is a horrible species, Ryuko, we both know that all too well. Satsuki and I are excellent examples for this insanity humanity suffers from - she and me, we would do everything to fulfill our ambitions. Such an irony, isn't it? To defeat, obliterate, to cull out the evil in this world, one has to become evil." Ragyo chuckles ironic, referencing how she and Soichiro used to talk about the topics that haunted the world and how she and him would have tried to improve the world with the Life Fibers.

"BUT YOU AIN'T MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE! ALL YOU DO IS DESTROYING IT! THAT'S WHAT THE LIFE FIBERS WANT YOU TO DO! IT'S WHY THEY MAKE YOU THINK YOU ARE ONE OF THEM, FOR FUCK SAKE!"

"Oh please, Ryuko." Ragyo answers. As Ryuko is about to perform a jump attack and kick Ragyo's face, Ragyo throws one half of the scissor blade towards Ryuko. This hits her and launches her into the throne room again, where she lands onto the ceiling of it. Ryuko lands a few meters away from her unconscious little sister. With the help of the Life Fibers, Ragyo jumps up to the throneroom again, while Satsuki tries to catch up on them.

"So this is it, huh? What kinda mother would actually attempt to kill her children, can you tell me that?! Did they made you go insane so hard you stopped caring? Turn it as you wish, mom, but I am one of your daughters, even if I consist of Life Fibers! That's on you!" Ryuko continues and rams the scissor blade out of her body, with which she commences combat against Ragyo. Both blades clash at each other, both Ryuko and Ragyo try to stay on their feet.

"LEAVE IT BE, ALREADY! THEY ARE GONE!"

"But the memories are not, Ryuko!" Ragyo yells angry and grabs Ryuko's hair.

"They are ALWAYS there! They never vanish - until you made sure everything and everyone who caused them has gone to hell, where they belong to!" she yells emotional and throws Ryuko against the throne.

"And this justifies killing all of humanity!?"

"It's a necessary sacrifice, just like everything and everyone else who died before! I am trying to create a better world, a world worth living in! Nothing can bring back what I lost and what I never received. You know nothing! You know nothing even if you explore my mind." Ragyo reacts as she blocks another attack by Ryuko. Senketsu liquifies Ryuko as Ragyo attempts to attack Ryuko another time - she misses, and Ryuko is able to score a hit on her mother, by punching her face. Thanks to the power of Ryuko's Life Fiber arm and Senketsu's strength, this causes a slight, open wound on Ragyo's cheek. Annoyed by that, Ragyo summons Life Fibers out of the ground - those Life Fibers form into imitations of Ryuko's friends. Houka, Sanageyama, Nonon and all the others, yet they can only be understood as such thanks to their appearance, since the Life Fibers do not transform into actual human skin. The imitations rather look like the Couturiers or humanoid Life Fiber monsters.

Their appearance forces Ryuko to deal with them first, and even though they aren't her actual friends, it still hurts attacking them,

since they move and act like them. Ragyo uses this distraction to take on her daughter.

"I understand you, mom! I really do, believe me! But if you don't stop with this nonsense, you're going to destroy everything, including your own wishes! You'll never find peace!"

"It never ends, Ryuko." Ragyo answers and hits Ryuko's torso, slicing it open. Blood scatters, Ryuko falls onto the ground. Ragyo picks her up.

"I cannot undo my deeds, Ryuko, but I can do it differently... and I will do it differently."

"But... not like this, mom!"

"We humans are all sinners. Our time has passed a long time ago. And I realized, as foolish as I was back then, that humanity does not deserve a quick end in which it allows the Life Fibers to simply spread across the universe - humanity has to act as a source of nourishment, and as a seed of development. I am simply fortunate enough to survive and expect a brave new world." Ragyo smiles obsessed and yet unsure, as Ryuko's words still hit her somewhere. Hearing her say "mom"...

"I am only doing what I believe to be right, child."

Ryuko tries to hit Ragyo with a headbutt, she can't reach her though. However, Ryuko notices Satsuki approaching Ragyo, and she is able to pierce her spear through Ragyo - but she only hits the Life Fiber part. Ragyo throws Ryuko away.

"What is it that you believe you could do with this weapon, Satsuki?!" Ragyo asks angry and punches Satsuki's faces, knocking her down. Ragyo rips the spear out of her and throws it against Ryuko, who is able to block off the attack with the scissor blade. The spear falls into the center of the room.

...

Inside the zeppelin, it appears that the Life Fibers are winning the battle, as the orbs are splitting apart to spawn more abominations and monsters, both in and outside of the airship. The remaining helicopters serve to defend the zeppelin and rescue the people on board, other than that there are little rescue capsules. There isn't much time left for Nudist Beach, the Life Fibers build up more and more pressure on them.

In the hangar, Sanageyama and Gamagoori, while strong, are slowly overwhelmed by the Life Fibers. Nonon's music can stun them, but not long enough to defeat the sheer endless hordes. The ammo inside the ship will soon be gone.

"Not to be a fun brake, but even I am slowly getting annoyed by my own music!" Nonon yells to Gamagoori and Sanageyama. Gamagoori grabs a larger Life Fiber monster and throws it over Sanageyama, who slices it into two halves - the monster falls out of the zeppelin after that.

"Dude this is busted, how many do these guys have!?" the Samurai asks annoyed. On the bridge, the situation is getting out of hands. Iori, Takarada and Houka watch as the guns and turrets are slowly taken out.

"According to my calculations, this ship will not sustain damage for longer than about seven minutes if the amount of enemies rises exponentially..."

"CAN YOU SPEAK LIKE A NORMAL PERSON!?" Takarada yells to Houka.

"In other words, we will die if we do not leave soon."

"THANK YOU!" he answers and walks to the board computers. Iori tries to organize rescue capsules and collects Life Fibers as materials - they may be useful for later in case some soldiers need

equipment made out of Life Fibers. In the meantime, Takarada grins evil, if briefly after annoyed.

"Grrr, I'm financing a damn zeppelin and these monsters think they can just destroy it like that!? OH YEAH WE'LL EVACUATE, BUT WE AIN'T GONNA GO OUT WITHOUT A BIG BANG, ALRIGHT!" he yells and presses a big, red button with a text above it, saying "In case of emergency, bring hell". After doing that, he switches the cameras to a larger room, displaying several hundreds of explosive devices, that seem to be extremely flammable - possibly enough to deal damage to Life Fibers. The idea alone that he needs to do this angers him so much he puts pressure onto the board computer, and accidentally destroys some of the controls.

"YEAH I REMEMBER THE TIME WHEN THIS RYUKO GAL TOLD ME HER WEIRD CLOTHING FRIEND BURNED OUT, SO IMMA DO THE SAME TO YOU NOW! Y'ALL GONNA BURN FOR THIS!"

...

With the scissor blade, Ryuko parries another attack of her mother, while keeping Satsuki away from her. Ragyo knows Satsuki is afraid that Ryuko might be harmed - so this is possibly just another means to force Satsuki into surrendering. Ryuko clearly however doesn't want to kill Ragyo, she wants to defeat her - but killing, no. Ragyo is still family. Senketsu seems worried.

"Ryuko, every time she hits you, you're getting weaker, I can feel that! I can't even taste your blood anymore. Avoid her attacks at any cost!"

"Easier said than done!"

Ragyo summons additional Life Fibers out of the walls to attack Ryuko, and they do that instantly. Ryuko just finished fighting the imitations, but Ragyo clearly does not wish to stop, she really wants to eliminate Ryuko. Smaller Life Fibers try to crawl onto Ryuko's body. Senketsu counters this by using her blood - his clothing

abilities force the Life Fibers to fall off of him and Ryuko again, as he heats himself and Ryuko up. But it seems as if this was planned by Ragyo - she quickly moves to her daughter and hits Ryuko's face with the dull part of the scissor blade, breaking her nose and nearly knocking her unconscious. At the very least, Ryuko is extremely dizzy now.

She tries to counter a followup by Ragyo and is able to slam away Ragyo's scissor blade. With both scissor blades, she can rip open another part of Ragyo's armor like Entity robe, which reveals more of her upper body - to be more specific, the area above her breast area and below the shoulders. It's near to the Life Fiber body parts, and when you take a look at them, you can clearly see that the Life Fibers aren't just on the body - they really became a part of the body. They are the body.

"I've had enough of you." Ragyo reacts and orders Life Fibers onto Ryuko's arms. Strings jump out of the ground and tie Ryuko's arms to the ground. Ragyo uses this to form her Life Fiber arm into a needle, which she rams into Ryuko's body. This causes a non lethal, but devastating wound.

"HOW DARE YOU ATTACK HER?!" Satsuki yells furious, in the hope she could gain Ragyo's attention. Ryuko watches the needle inside her body and tries to move it out, and while doing so, she notices the zeppelin slowly moving to the Entity, since she has vision to the window. Rescue capsules leave it.

"... grrr... fuck... this hurts, Senketsu... I... might need help or like... well..." she mumbles, already dizzy and now wounded. Ragyo and Satsuki continue their fight, giving Ryuko time to react to her wound. Boht the mother and the daughter become more brutal and brutal in their fighting style, more reckless, and both their attacks are harder to parry, and it shows. They can barely recover after their counterpart has attacked them - each hit can be felt by far, and still, Ragyo fights Satsuki with ease, choking out every possibility of wounding her.

"You are not going to destroy my plans once again, Satsuki! This is the end!"

"Even if this is the end, I will make sure that it will be your end as well!"

"You say that as if it would matter to me any longer!" Ragyo answers, watching her daughter closing distance to her.

"I am well aware of your fears and anxieties, mother! You are afraid of losing your life! You are afraid of death, and afraid that there is nothing that actually cares for you. Lie to me as much as you want, but in the end, behind the Life Fibers, behind this great "title" of High Entity, there is nothing but a sad, little creature, that tried to solve it's problems by violence!"

These words anger Ragyo.

"You are afraid your dreams will never be fulfilled.

I wouldn't even come up with killing you any longer. That would be far too merciful."

Ragyo raises both her arms, causing Life Fibers to jump out of the ground to attack Satsuki. Satsuki cuts the Fibers away with the spear she grabbed back in time, is then however grabbed by Ragyo - when Ragyo tries to hit Satsuki with the Life Fiber needle, the young woman kicks her away. Ryuko is able to help herself with Senketsu and close the wound, and supports Satsuki in battle - but the attempt fails. Ragyo notices too fast what Ryuko tries to do, grabs the scissor blades with summoned Life Fibers as Ryuko tries to perform an attack and throws them against a wall. Unarmed, Ryuko feels helpless, and in a matter of milliseconds, she feels Ragyo's Life Fiber arm against her body, launching her with the scissor blades against a wall. Ryuko slams her head against the grip of the scissor blades - this knocks her out.

"Yes, look at you! You'd kill your own family, your actual family, just to protect those that made you think you are worth something. But you are not. You are nothing to these monsters! They will replace you once you are too weak! They are nothing but a relict of passed days, they corrupted you - and if it is true what Ryuko said, then I would almost feel pity for you, if it wouldn't be for your nihilistic ambitions!"

"Corrupted, you say?" Ragyo asks curious and tries to grab Satsuki to her - she cuts the Life Fibers away.

"You do not understand Life Fibers - they, no, I offered you their warm hug, the warm hug of clothing, and the warm hug of your mother. Junketsu gave you the power you needed to resist me at all! If it wouldn't be for him, you would have been nothing. Even now he is on your side, his power is inside your weapon."

Ragyo waits for Satsuki to attack her anew. After cutting away the incoming Life Fibers, Satsuki fakes out an attack from the side. Ragyo expects this fakeout and blocks into a different direction with her needle arm - but instead of blocking it, Satsuki predicted it, and actually hits Ragyo by performing a slash attack from below. This rips open more of Ragyo's clothes and even causes a slight bleeding wound.

"You really would hurt your mother?! I offered you a place on my side!" Ragyo yells and is hit another time - a little wound on her cheek that bleeds now. Touching the blood with her human hand, this enrages Ragyo.

"... fine then."

...

Sanageyama and Takarada move the zeppelin towards the Layer of the High Entity. Houka, Nonon and Gamagoori help bringing the retreating soldiers into one of the rescue capsules, although Gamagoori acts as a guard and fends off incoming Life Fibers. There is enough space for 8 people inside a capsule. Gamagoori counts as

four people already. Houka and Nonon enter a capsule, while Takarada makes an announcement via the speakers.

"ALRIGHT GUYS, WE'LL GIVE THEM ONE HELL OF A PRESENT!" the crazy capitalist yells into the microphone.

"Several tons of experimental explosives - one could destroy all of Honnouji-Academy with that. Well shit, let's hope this does damage this overly large wool ball." Sanageyama mentions.

"There's literally everything in it, even illegal weapons - these guys will burn. Now let's get outta here, time's money!" Takarada answers and runs with Sanageyama to the rescue capsules. Only few men are left to defend the retreating units - whether they can leave the zeppelin before it detonates or not is questionable...

...

Satsuki defends herself from Ragyo's exhausting and suppressing attacks, and she barely is able to attack anymore. She loses more poisture and strength.

"Life Fibers will triumph after all, Satsuki, and we have to accept this! They are the next logical step in evolution! They will pave a way for this new world I will soon experience! They are the ones that will give solace upon our family! I do not wish more than that, Satsuki! And if you do resist me, I will accept this, yet I will not allow you to live any longer - as much as I hate the thought of harming you after seeing you after all this time in person. My own flesh and blood, and it despises me... it hurts.

A woman like you deserves to live, but I cannot allow this if you resist."

"You speak of our family as if you knew what it's like to have one! But you don't!"

"And do you?! Do you have one? Were you ever able to truly speak of a family? Our family, our bloodline is a tragedy, and I want this tragedy to end - I want to create something beautiful!"

"Tragedies never end well, mother, they can only end less horrible!"

"LIAR!" Ragyo screams. The ground moves under Satsuki due to Ragyo's rage, until Satsuki falls onto the ground. Ragyo throws the spear next to Ryuko's head, almost hitting her, and grabs Satsuki, just to throw her against the steps to the throne. Life Fibers on the ground crawl up on Satsuki and tie her up, while piercing and stinging her constantly - this doesn't cause wounds, but hurts like hell.

"If you do not accept my offer and gift, your tale will end here, Satsuki Kiryuin!"

Ryuko slowly wakes up and watches how Senketsu tries to move Ryuko's arms and hands in order to pull out the scissor blades while she was unconscious. The zeppelin comes closer.

Satsuki attempts to gain distance between her and Ragyo, but ultimately fails. Ragyo grabs up Satsuki, grabs her neck and starts choking her - Satsuki can only see the window and the zeppelin, and the stars in the space... and her mother's face, full of regret, hurt by the thought she has to kill her daughter now.

"Truly, I wanted to give you a chance... even if you don't believe me." Ragyo says with a tear in her face.

"But you would never understand it... in the end, no one does, no one ever did." Ragyo continues frustrated and chokes Satsuki, who's desperately trying to catch breath, fidgeting around. Ryuko can barely move.

(AN: Listen to "Eradicating Evil" from Resident Evil 8 on YouTube. If the track ends, continue with "Mother Miranda Final Boss Theme." until the entire battle is over, you'll notice when it's over.)

She can see however Nui slowly waking up and grabbing her rifle.

"Farewell, my little daughter... I'm sorry." Ragyo says painful and chokes harder. Satsuki fidgets around, slowly loses her vision - everything turns black very slowly.

" **HEY MOM!** " Nui yells angry.

This forces Ragyo to turn to Nui who's aiming furiously at Ragyo. Nui's arm is bleeding - she's using a devastator round.

" **La vie... est drôle... you stupid bitch.** "

Nui fires her weapon and destroys Ragyo's human shoulder.

Flesh explodes, blood spreads across the entire room, the Life Fibers choir changes drastically, turns darker, menacingly and more orchestral. Ragyo's bones are visible, and the human flesh. Satsuki is dropped and watches her mother screaming in agony as she watches her destroyed shoulder. Life Fibers try to stop the bleeding.

Satsuki crawls away and up to the throne. Nui stands up blood thirsty, obsessed, clearly losing her mind.

"HOW DARE YOU ATTACK ME?!" Ragyo yells angry at Nui.

" **MAMA NEVER WANTS TO PLAY WITH ME SO I'LL MAKE HER PLAY WITH ME!** " Nui yells back and looks into the weapon - there is one more bullet left. Satsuki watches how the zeppelin is about to hit the Layer.

"... oh... no..." she mumbles. The zeppelin flies directly into the Layer, not far away from the throne room - and briefly after, dozens of explosions can be heard, and Life Fibers are scattered across the various rooms inside the alien flagship. First, the explosions sound quiet, but they become louder, and louder, and after seconds, they hit the throne room. Millions of Life Fibers are heavily damaged by the explosions, the fiber structures in the walls break apart, letting

Ryuko realize they are responsible for keeping the entire ship intact. Above the family, Life Fibers fall from the ceiling. Everything is torn apart.

Ragyo and Nui are hit by one of the explosions and launches into a lower floor of the Entity, falling into a room that disintegrates more and more, until it turns into a bridge, with explosions below them. Satsuki barely catches onto the throne before falling down into the flames, Ryuko retreats.

Mother and daughter slowly stand up again.

"... what... makes you think you could choose what your life is about? You... are supposed to be my tool, my weapon, MY PSYCHOPATH, not a living creature?!" Ragyo yells confused. Nui slowly crawls towards Ragyo. Explosions on the left reveal the skyscrapers of Tokyo.

"... but I ain't a psychopath... oh no... just a little... lost... aha..." Nui mumbles insane and grabs Ragyo.

"... but mama wouldn't hurt her little... daughter, would she?" she chuckles more.

"You're not... my daughter!"

"Oh yes, oh yes I am! I mean... I already killed daddy... so why not kill mommy too!?" she continues and tries to slash Ragyo with the blade of her rifle, Ragyo blocks the attack however and stands up.

"I raised you for the both of us! You shouldn't feel emotions, empathy and love because if you would, you would only realize how much pain this world truly is, how cruel it really is and how strange it really is! Remember the song?! The Blumenkranz!?"

"But it's just a little song... I always thought... I am your little child... ahah... but you never wanted that, didn't you? Thought I'd... be your offspring... but no... just another... tool..."

"You are not my offspring! That was a simple lie to keep you under control! I wanted you to think I am your mother so that you stay submissive and do what I want in the hope you'd believe I would accept you! And maybe I would have! But I did not, for your own good!"

"WAS DECAPITATING MYSELF FOR MY OWN GOOD TOO!?" she screams and rams Ragyo, knocking her with herself onto the ground. Nui slashes open a part of Ragyo's upper body, even though there isn't much left, after all, she just destroyed Ragyo's shoulder.

"And even in death you are not useful!" Ragyo yells and hits Nui's face with the needle, opening her cheek. Nui moans in pain and falls away. Ragyo catches breath and observes her wounds more closely - the Life Fibers could stop the bleeding, but the flesh is gone forever.

"... oh no... no no no no..." she mumbles scared all of a sudden. Under her, the flames of the zeppelin devour the Life Fibers. Obsessed by the thought of harming Ragyo, Nui attacks Ragyo another time, wilder and more unpredictable than before, and the mother can barely defend herself, until she's trapped in a corner at the end of the bridge. Ragyo tries to summon Life Fibers to attack Nui, but to her negative surprise, they do not follow her order at all. The Life Fibers stay in the ground.

"Attack her!" she yells, but due to Nui's presence and actions before, they do not dare to attack her... and possibly, the Life Fibers notice that Ragyo is getting weaker. Parasitarian as they are, they would just wait until one of them dies and then feast on them. And the other one will be infected by them. Ragyo can only try to defend the attacks of the delusional, mentally destroyed Nui.

Satsuki watches Ragyo and Nui fight each other. Ryuko pulls out the scissor blades. She watches how, due to the explosions and flames, the white Life Fibers inside the walls start to burn away and slowly dissolve.

"Hey... Senketsu? Are you thinking what I'm thinking?"

"Mayhem, hm?"

"Yeah... let's cut this shit in half."

Satsuki in the meantime attempts to catch up on Ragyo and Nui while Ryuko tries to destroy the Layer entirely.

...

Outside, Ichiro and his men observe the battle of Tokyo, seeing the explosions - shocked by this, the psychopath needs to reconsider his plans.

"Boss, this... well... isn't looking good for us?"

"If they destroy the Layer they will concentrate on us and we need the time! KILL THEM! MOVE YOUR DAMN ASSES TO TOKYO AND KILL THESE SUBHUMANS! I'M SO DONE WITH THIS!" Ichiro yells angry and kills one of his own Couturiers in anger by using the scythe and slicing the Couturier into four parts. Another shot by Mako's tank hits the Honnouji-Academy and lands next to Ichiro.

"AND KILL THIS FUCKING MANKANSHOKU BITCH ALREADY!"

...

Nui performs quick attacks with the rifle blade, yet fails and is hit by Ragyo - she hits Nui's torso and slices open the part above her breast area, causing her to bleed heavily. Nui falls down, and when she sees Ragyo trying to execute Nui, she uses her legs to kick her into one of the lower floors. Ragyo falls onto a little foundation, near to the flames. Her destroyed shoulder lands first onto the, only few meters large foundation. Life Fibers crawl into her body and start to suck up Ragyo's blood - but they do not seem to show any sign of actually helping her. Nui jumps down and tries to hit Ragyo, however, with her arm, she slams Nui away and onto the edge of the

foundation, where the flames almost burn her. The foundation is unstable, and the Life Fibers can barely keep them on it. Lower Life Fiber beings watch them and the fire in fear and anxiety, and above them, Satsuki can see how a Life Fiber humanoid burns away in the flames. It seems as if they can kill them.

Ragyo tries to get up by holding onto an pyramid like artifact next to her. Nui is a few meters away and slowly approaching her.

"Mama... is just another human!" Nui yells, her eyes dead, her body cold, her wounds bleeding and yet she does not care at all. Ragyo stands back on her feet.

"But don't you worry... I'll kill you too..."

Ragyo watches how Nui tries to attack her with a slash. Since she expected the attack, she jumps away, even though she can barely keep herself on her legs due to the wounds, and with Nui missing, Ragyo slams the Life Fiber arm against Nui. Nui lands against a sharp artifact.

"You've lost your mind."

Nui throws a bunch of Life Fibers at Ragyo.

"Lost my mind!? I can't lose my mind!" she laughs and is hit by an explosion, which launches her away. Satsuki in the meantime tries to get down to them. She notices how Ryuko and Senketsu cut off Life Fibers in order to increase his and the scissor blades power. On the rooftops of Tokyo, Satsuki also observes how some of the larger Life Fiber Beings suddenly start to dissolve - it appears as if the destruction of the Layer damages the conscient monsters too, up to the point where it would actually harm them physically. Why? Possibly because the Life Fibers, since they are connected with the dark halls and therefore the High Entity and the other hive minds, can't process what is going on anymore. After all, they likely do not have a brain.

Ryuko in the meantime is surprised by Hinata who appears to watch Ryuko's actions from the distance at the throne.

"Nothing against you, Hinata, but I ain't gonna let this weird wool ball live!"

Hinata continues to stand there, neutral, as if the destruction of the Layer is equal to him.

"I understand..." he says and dissolves. Understand? Maybe why Ryuko does it in the first place?

"Just a lil more, Ryuko!" Senketsu says.

"Gotcha!"

...

Satsuki continues to climb down until she reaches the foundation with Ragyo and Nui. She wants to intervene in the battle, but before she is able to reach either of them, Ragyo slams Nui back into the lowest floor of the Layer, which nearly breaks Nui's back due to the deep fall. She crawls through the large, empty room. The walls are burning, and a large part of it is completely open, giving vision to Tokyo. A few Life Fiber humanoids see Nui and instantly run away, afraid of her, despite her not being a Life Fiber anymore. Ragyo tries to summon Life Fibers on the foundation, large white needles that should pierce Nui - but before she is able to do so, Satsuki attacks her. Ragyo tries to throw Satsuki off of her, however, in her attempt to do so, she and her daughter both fall down to the floor where Nui is on. Blood scatters as this furtherly intensifies Ragyo's bloody wound.

"I won't let you harm her!" Satsuki threatens. Ragyo attacks Satsuki on the ground with her Life Fiber arm and launches her into an artifact, of which the sharp tip on the side pierces Satsuki's arm a bit, inflicting a wound. Satsuki has to drag her arm out of the artifact first.

"Death and destruction is what you brought upon this divine race! And to think you were one of them..." Ragyo judges Nui as she tries to stand up. She kicks Nui's face, breaking her nose, attacks her again, hits the torso, grabs Nui and throws her with the Life Fiber arm away. Nui loses her weapon in the air.

"And for what? For a group of humans that will reject you soon enough? You should have tried to redeem yourself by killing them all! Look at what you have done!"

Nui chuckles as Ragyo approaches her.

"But isn't that... the kinda stuff you wanted from me?" she smiles.

"Produce clothes, be clothes, you should cover the world with a beautiful dress and you failed at that!"

"... but I still cut clothes..." she chuckles. Ragyo attempts to execute Nui with the Life Fiber arm once and for all, yet Nui avoids the attack barely, stands up and attacks Ragyo with her fists, punching her away from her.

"Nothing but conscient, worthless clothing is what you are." Ragyo insults and rips open Nui's left leg, making her fall once more. She falls with her face into the Life Fiber ground - the parasites that once were a part of her seem to be afraid however. Satsuki desperately tries to remove the artifact but the Life Fibers stay persistent.

"I'm... not clothing..." she mumbles angry and looks forward, seeing her rifle. Before Ragyo is able to attack Nui, she crawls forward, grabs the rifle and cuts open Ragyo's legs herself, causing her to fall and being unable to properly walk - the Life Fibers need to heal the wound first. Nui stands up, despite her wounds, and cuts away the Life Fiber arm, which has to regenerate as well. Both these attacks appear with great speed, and too fast for the already badly wounded Ragyo to react properly. Ragyo tries to retreat as Nui walks to her. Nui's left eye twitches, and her pupils have shrunk.

"I'm not clothing!" Nui yells at Ragyo and attacks her. Without her Life Fiber arm, she cannot defend herself properly, and all that can help her now is the intelligent Life Fiber robe that tries to deform itself to save Ragyo. But Nui doesn't stop - more and more hits attack Ragyo's human arm that is saved by the robe, but of course, with each hit, the robe takes more damage, and more skin is revealed.

"I'm not clothing!" she continues enraged, cuts a wound into the arm, slams into the wound again, until the flesh is visible.

"I'M NOT CLOTHING!" she screams and slams the arm to the side until Ragyo is vulnerable.

"YOU'RE THE ONE WHO STARTED ALL OF THIS!"

Ragyo's influence has destroyed Nui.

"THEY ALL HAVE A MAMA BUT I CAN'T HAVE ONE?!"

"You..."

"THEY ALL HAVE A PAPA BUT I CAN'T HAVE ONE!?"

Nui raises the rifle blade.

"THEY ALL RECEIVE LOVE BUT I CAN'T HAVE IT?!"

"Don't you dare..."

"YOU DON'T DESERVE ANY CHILDREN, YOU STUPID BITCH!"

Nui screams and rams her blade directly into Ragyo's lower torso, causing Ragyo to scream in pure agony. She continues to move the blade deeper and deeper into her "mother" until it almost pierced the entire body, and from there on, she moves the blade down slowly but steady, until the womb is ripped open - the blade leaves the body around the genital area, and only then, Ragyo is able to kick Nui away. Nui laughs crazy as she feels Ragyo's blood on her body, and when she stands up and sees Ragyo crying, it only motivates her to

continue... but in that moment, the ground on Nui breaks apart and lets her fall out of the Layer.

Satsuki removes her arm from the artifact and tries to reach for Nui - she only watches how she's laughing as the foundation she is on falls onto the ground. A terrible view for the big sister, and she can't even say if Nui can survive the fall, after all, they are several hundreds of meters in the air. Despite all the flames and screams, Nui's tormented laughter is well audible. Satsuki bites her teeth together and looks around, trying to find a safe spot for her and Ryuko, and hopefully a way to somehow save Nui, while Ragyo lies next to one of the artifacts. Life Fibers curiously watch Ragyo bleeding, and the Life Fibers on her body can't really save her much longer.

Ryuko in the meantime, with Senketsu's help, extends her scissor blades up to the point where they are so incredibly huge that a normal human couldn't even bear them any longer. They took the size of half the Layer, which is hardly possible to comprehend - but with the powers Ryuko and Senketsu have collected over the last years and weeks, this should be enough to take down the monstrosity the Layer is without a doubt. And so, Ryuko opens up the scissor blades that are as large as an entire skyscraper - Senketsu gives Ryuko's black arms energy, fueling them with the needed power to wield the giant weapon, and together they start cutting through the various walls of the Layer. Combined with the destruction of the zeppelin, this ultimately seals the fate of the home of the Life Fibers.

Satsuki watches how the blades are about to cut Ragyo in half - but she cannot bring it over her heart to let her die... and besides, Satsuki stated Ragyo doesn't deserve to die, even if death knocks on the door thanks to Nui. She quickly runs to her mother and grabs her up, trying to move with her to any room that looks barely safe, at least safer than what this large room is supposed to be, and indeed, she realizes that in the following room, there are the orbs that can possibly save them. Satsuki opens one of them and gets Ragyo into

one, as well as herself, while Ryuko continues to break everything down. Outside, monsters scream as they die due to the flames. The young woman attempts to somehow activate the orb, but it appears as if it knows by itself already what it has to do, and it quickly undocks from the Layer.

The undocking isn't fast enough however - the Layer breaks apart, the Life Fibers fall from the sky, of which a large part of them dissolve already. Satsuki feels how the orb leaves the Entity, but it falls with high velocity onto the ground, and before she can really help herself, the orb lands into a skyscraper and ricochets onto the ground.

This turns Satsuki unconscious, and everything goes black...

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Ichiro is speechless. He and his underlings watch how the Layer falls apart into thousands of pieces, dissolving. The scissor blades and the zeppelin have destroyed the thing that lasted such a long time.

The Couturiers look to Ichiro, nervous about what they should do now.

Not even Ichiro knows that.

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(AN: Listen to "Overrun" from Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice on YouTube.)

When Ragyo awakes, she can hear humans screaming all around her. Fire here and there - smoke dominates the lower sky of Tokyo.

The skyscrapers that were infested with the Life Fibers are slowly liberated of them as they dissolve due to the death of their Entities and the Layer.

Sparks and little, dead Life Fiber cells hover around in the air and fly away. Everything Ragyo tried to build up, everything she wanted, it's all gone now. Everything dies around her. When she rises up from the orb, only she is here. Satsuki apparently has left, one way or another. Ragyo slowly moves through the orb and leaves it, looking around. Tokyo is burning - this used to be one of the cities where she spent the most time in. Seeing how everything is going down because of her makes her feel... different.

There are no words that could describe the feeling the mother has right now. Her body feels so weak. Her wounds can't be healed in time. The only thing that keeps her alive are the Life Fibers on the right side of her body, but the blood loss will eventually make them dissolve too. Ragyo's death is just a matter of time. And she knows that.

That, and the thought that her dreams and wishes can never be fulfilled any longer. What's left is the distant wish of her own family in the garden of the Kiryuin manor. Her husband is dead, her brother is dead, her entire family is dead, and her daughters... well. And the Life Fibers? They seem to have turned away from her. They had enough time to save and support Ragyo against her own, mad creation, but they did not. It's like Satsuki predicted.

And with all of this in mind, Ragyo only now realizes, after all these years, after all the horrors she brought upon the world, that none of it was right.

Ragyo doesn't know what to do anymore. There is no time for absolution - no one would accept regrets from her. She slowly starts standing up, but she can barely walk due to her wounds. Every step is painful, even if it was made on cool, soft grass... but even then, that grass is covered by dead Life Fibers, by blood, by mud and by

snow that falls onto her. In the distance she can see a Life Fiber monster burning away, screaming, as if it wants help.

The park she is in appears to be the same one Nui had her transformation before. There is still the dead Tower Fiber in the lake. There is the crashed armored vehicle. And dead Nudist Beach soldiers on the ground. A few helicopters fly above her.

She just tries to move on, stumbling across corpses, corpses that were ultimately her fault. There was the time where Ragyo wanted to make the world better by using the Life Fibers, where she complained about the brutality and violence this world she lived in had to offer, and now, she nurtured all of this even further. Every once in a while, tears roll down her face, and she whimpers, knowing she failed - not as an ambassador of the Life Fibers, but as a human, as a wife, and as a mother.

Carefully, Ragyo walks down a few stairs. There, she finds under debris a buried young man who tries to get out of them. When he sees Ragyo however, he reacts shocked, scared by her appearance. Ragyo tries to help him, but the closer he comes to him, the more he panics, until he accidentally stumbles upon bricks and hits his head open - this kills him. His blood falls onto Ragyo's body.

"... what did I do...?" she mumbles defeated. If her goal was to use the Life Fibers to create a "brave new world", then she must have expected a different outcome. Destruction is destruction however, and her wishes are not to be fulfilled. She isn't better than any of the people Soichiro and she used to judge.

What an irony - the person that wanted to change the world was corrupted and even went so far that she would try to destroy the world twice, both via different approaches. Embrace clothing, or serve as material for clothing. Become the sinner, or eventually turn into the sin, one way or another, either as actual Life Fiber being, or as food for it. Her blood leaves a path behind her.

She soon reaches a destroyed fence after walking around slowly for several minutes, with which she tries to keep herself on foot. Carefully walking on the mud, she finds a little hill with a destroyed pavillion on top and a little garden full of flowers of all kinds. Since the smoke dominates the area, Ragyo can't really look up much further than maybe 30-40 meters, but it's enough to make her realize Tokyo is in ruins.

"... no..."

Above her, another part of the layer breaks apart - it's remains either dissolve or fall into the lake. Behind her, Ragyo can hear steps. Stone that breaks apart. She turns around and hears a sad whimpering.

There, Ragyo can see her little Nui, bloody, heavily wounded, her clothes burned and her hair destroyed. Ashes and blood cover her face, her clothes are destroyed, skin is visible. But the most painful thing she can see is the tormented, empty face Nui has. It's like the one she saw back when she was all alone, when she first met her creation. Hopeless, helpless and lonely.

Ragyo looks down to her little child - and Nui looks back. They both look into their eyes.

"... do you... remember the time... *coughs blood*... wh-when you sent me away... to this... ci-city?" Nui asks slowly. Ragyo's eyes seem glassy.

"... do you... remember when you locked me away... for months..."

"..."

Nui approaches Ragyo a little further. Her wounds appear lethal, unless someone helps her in the next two hours. It's a miracle she can still walk.

"... do you... remember when I should... ca-cast my b-body away..." she whimpers.

"..."

"... have you ever wondered how it's like... to be me?"

"..."

"... do you know why I did... everything you wanted...?"

Ragyo slowly nods.

"... you wanted a mother... you loved me... but I did not." Ragyo answers. Tears seem to roll down her eyes, realizing she isn't any better than her mother. Not better than anything - just another monster.

And Ragyo knows exactly what that means.

"I always wanted a mama..."

"..."

"... but mama never wanted me." she mumbles and looks down, looking at her weapon. Blood drops into it, enabling one last devastator round. Nui slowly aims up with her last power.

"... I can still hear the rain.

... it'll never go away." Nui mumbles destroyed.

Ragyo closes her eyes. She bites her teeth together - even now, she is still afraid of death, and now it stands right in front of her. For three seconds, she keeps her eyes closed, trying to accept the inevitable.

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It's still raining in Nui's mind - and above Ragyo, the thunder, the rain and the lightnings are the strongest.

"... I'm sorry, my little child." Ragyo cries quietly, looking into her daughters eyes.

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"... I know, mom."

Nui fires the devastator round at Ragyo. It tears apart Ragyo's entire torso, revealing bones, flesh and more - she falls onto the ground.

Nui drops her weapon, kneels down powerless and starts crying as the imaginary rain in her mind blurs out all of her vision, and darkens the battlefield Tokyo has become.

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(AN: MT Hensou Gata, start at 2:10. YouTube. I cried here.)

Briefly after, Ryuko and Satsuki appear, worried about the shot that fell until they see their little sister. Satsuki however also notices Ragyo, and so, while Ryuko decides to run to Nui, Satsuki meets up with her mother. Ryuko hugs Nui.

"... mama... she... she is evil to me... she..."

"... shhhh, I know, it's okay." Ryuko tries to comfort her.

"... mama started it, not me, I'm not the evil one... no I'm not..."

"... no you aren't. Mom can't hurt you anymore. Come. Senketsu, Satsuki and me will protect you."

"... mama..."

"Come, stand up." Ryuko pleads and helps Nui stand up.

"No more fighting for you. You're done with it."

"... but I gotta protect you... and Satsuki... and..."

"You protected enough." Ryuko says and slowly walks away with Nui as she keeps her tight to her body. Satsuki stands next to her dying mother.

Snow and Life Fibers fall onto Ragyo. She whimpers, tries to catch air, cries - she cannot move her body parts at all. Out of the smoke, Life Fibers appear slowly, including Hinata and his followers, as well as a Colossus and a Tower Fiber... the ones Nui spared before. They watch how Satsuki looks down to her mother.

Her body feels so cold. The Life Fibers slowly start to dissolve.

"All this time I wanted to kill you, mother. There was not a single day where I did not wish to kill you. Ever since I found out you nearly killed Ryuko, I wanted to kill you.

The day where you die has now come... and I feel like I am losing something." Satsuki says. Calm, but there is a latent sign of appreciation and care for her mother.

"... Sats... uki..."

"Mom..."

"... I'm... scared."

"I know."

"I... just wanted... to make it better..." she mumbles crying. Satsuki kneels down to her.

"... make it better... than my own mother... everything..."

Ragyo lies on cold stone, her blood flows down on it. Satsuki carefully moves up her head and puts it onto her legs. The Life Fibers carefully observe mother and daughter.

"... I... I... I've gone mad..."

"No. You simply... well... lost your way. But... I'm not angry at you. Not anymore."

"... please... promise me you never end I-like me... please."

"I promise it, mom."

"... good."

Ragyo looks into the sky. Now, that the Life Fibers have vanished, it's snowing again. The night would be beautiful today.

It makes her pine and dream of better days, days that could have been if it wouldn't have been for the Life Fibers.

"... I... wish I would have never... found this... primordial Life Fiber..."

Satsuki carefully pets Ragyo. Her wounds are horrible. Everything is horrible. She slowly seems to die now, as Ragyo starts hearing voices. The voices of children. Her vision blurs.

"I... always wished... I could have... my own... garden... full of flowers... and my own family..."

...

Ragyo imagines the garden of the Kiryuin manor during spring time. She and Soichiro sit on a bench, while they watch their little children - Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui - play in the garden. Wife and husband cuddle as they continue to watch. Ragyo leans her head to Soichiro's shoulder.

"... it's... beautiful... Satsuki."

Moments later, the three girls turn to their parents and approach them. Ryuko jumps at Soichiro's leg and cuddles at it, then he grabs her and puts her onto his lap. Nui looks up to her big sister happily and is brought onto his lap as well.

"Dad, will you play guitar later?" Ryuko asks curious.

"I want to play guitar too!" Nui chuckles.

"Hehe, of course I will." he smiles.

Satsuki smiles at her two sisters and then looks up to her mother, who turns her head to Satsuki.

Ragyo picks up her little daughter. As Ragyo goes on about her dream, about her wish, Satsuki starts feeling different. The little kid hugs and cuddles Ragyo.

Hearing this dream is a wish Satsuki did not know she wanted to have, but one that sounds... magical. Harmonical, like the family she wanted herself.

"I love you, mom." both Satsuki's say.

Ragyo cries.

"I... love... you too."

Ragyo's head leans to the side. The Life Fibers dissolved entirely. What's left is one half of a human body.

Ragyo Kiryuin is dead.

Snow falls onto Ragyo's corpse. And Satsuki found peace. As she looks up to the smoke, she can see the hallucination of her mother one last time.

She smiles, and cries at the same time. But eventually, she disappears too. Her mothers blood is on her hands, and on her legs.

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A car can be heard briefly after - Iori, Houka, Gamagoori and the rest of the group. When they exit the car, they can see the Life Fibers and prepare for a fight, but seeing how they surrounded Satsuki without actually trying to harm her makes them realize there is no need to fight. Nonon jumps out of the car and despite her wounds, she tries to reach Satsuki. When she does, she also finds aunt Ragyo.

"... Satsuki?" Nonon asks worried. Satsuki looks up to Nonon.

"... I found my mom, Nonon." Satsuki smiles with a tear in her face. Nonon is speechless.

"... what... do we do now?"

"... I want to bury her... when this is over. The garden still exists."

Nonon nods and leaves Satsuki be. Ryuko brings Nui to Houka and Iori who take a look at her wounds. Satsuki eventually stands up with her dead mother on her arms, walking pass Hinata.

"Kiryuin." Hinata says. Satsuki looks up to him.

"... as High Entity, you decide our next step. The Kiryuin family... is holy. Whatever thy wish is... it will be done."

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Like A Thistle, With Proud Thorns 1-2

AN: Today's August 10th and that is my birthday, and because of that, here is the next chapter, or at least part 1 of it! Have fun, and apologies for taking so long, I just didn't feel well recently. The second part of Chapter 29 will be very emotional and blow your mind. For now, enjoy!

The sky is clearing up. Without the Layer of the Entity, most of the conscient Life Fibers start losing their mind, causing them to walk around irrationally, until the energy left in them is depleted. Those who lost their energy, die and dissolve in the sky, slowly in the cold weather, but how the dying Life Fibers treat their end is in it's own way tragic.

On the streets, humans watch behind covers and windows how the hostile monsters slowly fall apart. Some scream in rage, try desperately to obtain human blood to lengthen their time on Earth for a few more minutes and hours - those who cannot manage to do that, fall into several pieces, and those pieces into additional ones, and eventually, they are spread away, like ashes in the wind.

Other Life Fibers hide in the alleys, trying to hide and spend their end lonely in the dark, where no one can see them.

And a few whimper about their fate, walk together slowly through the streets. A tall colossus slowly falls apart, his eyes closing more and more as he watches his friends dissolve. Slowly, he falls to the side as his legs fall apart. Humanoid Life Fibers watch their arms, legs and bodies disappear, in vain that cannot be properly felt.

There won't be anything left of them, apart from the dead cells that once inhabited a living being - it's good and it's bad sides.

It's cells like these that pass Nonon, Satsuki, Ryuko, and the other survivors in the park, which are watched by the remaining Life Fibers

that seem to be now on Satsuki's side.

None of the Nudist Beach combatants know exactly what they should do now with them. All they know is that they follow Satsuki's orders - likely due to her being the next part in the hierarchy of the High Entity. Maybe Satsuki always was destined to this - maybe the idea of freedom could have never been achieved the way she believed. Whatever Satsuki, who's holding her dead mother, does, the Life Fibers watch her curiously.

The eyes of the Life Fibers follow all her steps, step by step, and only the slight and blurred reflection of the world around them and the things they do is visible in their otherwise empty organs of sight. If Satsuki seems to be sad or angry, the Life Fibers try to understand her and act as she wishes to. They appear from their behaviour a bit like children that love their mother. It supports an, at least in the beginning, strange but somehow caring and, in a distant sense, sweet and good dynamic between her and her former enemies.

The Elite Four and Takarada watch how Satsuki brings Ragyo to them. Ryuko already brought Nui into the back of the car where Houka and Iori give her first aid. Ragyo must have wounded her really badly, as she sometimes loses her consciousness. It might be due to the bloodloss - her body as it was before was able to produce blood which would support the Life Fibers in her body, but since most or all of the Life Fibers inside it have turned into something like actual flesh and skin, if not real human one, her physical power is gone for the most part too. All that is left is the combat experience - but everyone agrees that she cannot continue any longer. Ryuko in the meantime, knowing Nui is being treated, walks to Satsuki. Gamagoori takes a look at the dead mother - the corpse is horrible. Signs of a once human body have to be searched.

Ryuko looks to her big sister who's divided about the current situation. Satsuki is looking at the Honnouji-Academy. On the walls, red lights can be seen. The Life Fibers there are mostly Couturiers made by Ichiro, hence why they've survived the destruction. Without an Layer or an Entity copy, they might die too however - and yet,

Satsuki knows she cannot sit it out. Ichiro collected Life Fibers over the last few weeks and months in this very fortress he has prepared now, and if he isn't stopped, he might summon something upon this world that should not see the light of day at all.

"Are you alright, Satsuki?" Ryuko asks careful. Satsuki breathes in and out.

"Yeah."

"What about mom?" she asks. Satsuki turns to her.

"What mom did cannot be forgotten. There is still the scar in my heart and my mind that she inflicted upon me. But... I am sick of thinking about it. It's good that she is dead. Maybe... if there really is a place where you go to when you die, she may be happy now, and the woman she used to be."

"So... you've made peace."

"Not entirely... but I think it's a good step." Satsuki answers. Ryuko nods and looks to Honnouji. Senketsu seems worried.

"How should we approach Honnouji now? It appears as if they have fortified it. See all those lights? The Director's men must be many." he mentions. Satsuki nods to that. She looks up to the Life Fibers that obey her now. Despite her never wanting that, a part of Ragyo's wish has been fulfilled, and now she leads those that are left.

What should one do with these "monsters" now? All sorts of sizes and appearances. Humanoids, similar to the Couturiers, a Colossus, or a Tower Fiber. Looking at them, Satsuki see's parasites - on the other hand, something inside her tells her that even those parasites just want a home, or at the very least absolution in their last hours of existence.

Every help is needed now, and especially against the Director and his well protected Honnouji Academy. And certain is that the Life

Fibers can sustain a lot of damage and support in combat.

"We should speak with Mikisugi and the others. I fear Ichiro will use the time he has right now to strengthen the defense of the Academy. And whatever he is planning with the remaining Life Fibers, there must be something evil. Time is running out, I fear." Satsuki answers to Senketsu.

"It looks like they see you as their leader now. Watch how they look at you. They trust you." Senketsu continues. The big sister nods slowly. The pale, thin Hinata, who's bones are covered by nothing but his skin now due to the lack of blood in his body, awaits an order. His white robe loses strength. Even he dies. Just like everything that was involved with the Layer once.

"Gamagoori!" Satsuki yells. The tall man walks to Satsuki.

"Prepare the car - bring Ryuko and the rest to the others."

"I will." he answers and starts the car. While the Elite-Four get into it, Ryuko looks back to her sister as she walks down to the Life Fibers.

"What are you doing?"

"Just warn Tsumugu and Mikisugi for me."

"Alright." Ryuko answers and looks at the Life Fibers. Those were once enemies. It's a surreal feeling.

The car drives away with her.

...

On Honnouji, preparations for the defense are made. Life Fibers cut themselves into walls, fuse together, and inside the Academy, horrific sounds and subtle screams can be heard. In the halls, Ichiro watches how his men cannot finish their goal, Shinra Seisei, in time. The insane psychopath seems like he's losing his mind to this view, and yet, he must have something left to counter Nudist Beach's

attack, in case it happens. He still believes he is the winner of this battle.

There is no doubt he could prepare a weapon out of all those Life Fibers that were once humans. Enough to take down Nudist Beach. And once that is done, he'd find enough time to take down Earth one nation at a time.

At the very least they are working on something that can at least imitate a fracture of Shinra Seisei's, or even Shinra Koketsu's power. Ichiro gets a little glimpse on their work. It doesn't seem to be any ordinary clothing any longer, but something that could cover a small area - enough to put it into the sunken courtyard of the Academy. A round form that seems to inhabit millions of Life Fibers, pressed into each other, like a big, red plate. It does not seem threatening, but looks can be an illusion. The Couturiers keep distance to their master. His presence alone is threatening enough. The blood on his empty eye socket is dried out. He eventually leaves the halls to inspect the Academy's defense.

...

At the port of Tokyo, Nudist Beach has fortified it's position with everything they could. The amount of survivors is relatively low though - a few hundreds, by far not enough to challenge the Life Fibers in Honnouji. Even if the numbers would be big enough, the group lacks equipment. Most of the units can only fight in melee combat, and for that, they would have to reach the Life Fibers first, and preferably as fast as they could.

Mikisugi, Tsumugu and Takarada organize their units in the meantime and ordered them to scavenge for resources and anything that could be useful. Be it food to keep the soldiers awake and with energy, little moral boosts like board games or, and of course weapons of all kind, and vehicles. Helicopters, boats, weapons for longer ranges such as tanks, or materials to repair DTRs. Everything can be used.

Takarada is counting money on a desk he and his men found somewhere in the buildings. Around him, a group of guard protect him.

"20000. 30000. 40000. 50000." he counts and puts the money away.

"20000. 30000. 40000. 50000." he continues. There is a ton of money next to him.

"Hah! I don't even have that much cash left! Hey, Mikisugi!" Takarada calls his ally who's still a little damaged by the wounds.

"You know Tokyo, don't you? Can I pay people here to do the most homicidal nonsense one can think of?!"

"Tokyo is entirely different than Ôsaka, Kaneo. People here might be rough but only very few are impressed by money. Still, they know Nudist Beach, and when it calls for help, they will support us as good as they can... although I believe after all this destruction, there isn't much left to help us." he sighs.

A car drives into the camp - Nudist Beach units that have found supplies.

"Boss, we can barely find anything salvagable in the city." one of them says to Mikisugi.

"As I said..." Mikisugi continues and sits down. Tsumugu sits at the quay wall and smokes a cigarette. He approaches him. The man with the iroquese cut watches Honnouji Academy.

"Tsumugu?"

"... hrmpf."

"Talk to me. Ever since that number in the city, you stopped talking."

"..."

Tsumugu sighs and throws the cigarette away. He seems to be at a loss of words.

"Tsumugu?"

"Let's just get this shit over with once and for all." he mentions calm and yet frustrated, somewhat defeated. More cars appear, and a helicopter starts. Outside of Tokyo, Maiko Ogure and her crew, the Mankanshokus, continue with their suppressing fire on Honnouji. Mikisugi looks to them.

"We may wanna get them to us. Their tank might be useful." Mikisugi considers. Takarada runs to Mikisugi.

"Hey!"

"Hm?"

"Radio for ya! It's Matoi."

"Matoi? Oh good... good, she's alive." he says relieved and grabs the radio, then speaks into it.

"Ryuko? Is everything alright? Are you guys well?"

"Mikisugi?" she asks.

"Yeah, it's me."

"We're coming. Satsuki too, but with a different group. Don't attack them." she says calm.

"Why would we attack Satsuki?" he asks.

"Look to the main street." she continues. Mikisugi looks perplexed towards the exit and notices the car on which Ryuko stands on at the moment. Far, far behind the car in the city, Mikisugi can see the Life Fiber horde controlled by Satsuki, who's standing on the Tower Fiber.

Seeing this sight, Mikisugi drops the radio as he is paralyzed for a brief moment. Slowly but steady, more of the units notice the approaching Life Fiber forces, that in truth however are allied, or at least not hostile. Some of the men and women aim their weapons at the monsters, no one dares to actually open fire though, especially when they notice Satsuki.

It still makes it hard for them to trust the Life Fibers, after all, they caused all this trouble in the first place. And yet, these monsters try their best to be more than that, to be more than just the parasites everyone thinks they are. Mikisugi at the very least has, with Satsuki being guarded by the Life Fibers, a reason to not open fire immediately, and this might help coming to a conclusion between humans and Life Fibers.

Everyone knows they need help - even if it's the Life Fibers. And only Life Fibers can reliably defeat Life Fibers. Is there a choice? Probably not. All Mikisugi does at the moment is considering his options, and his experience with Life Fibers. He isn't a heartless man. He could have incapacitated Nui back when Ryuko was close to death, but he did not pull the trigger. He saw something good in her - nothing much, and possibly something only very, very few people could experience, but he saw it in her. He saw that beyond all the threads and all the madness is still something that wants to be loved and wants to love - maybe there is something similar in those wandering beings too.

After a few minutes, the Elite Four, Iori, Ryuko and Nui arrive at the camp. The Life Fibers are still minutes away. Iori and Houka quickly open the backdoor, while Gamagoori brings Nui to the improvised hospital the organisation prepared in the short time they had inside a warehouse. Ryuko looks back to her little sister with a worried and sad face, hoping she'll be alright. She hears Mikisugi sighing as he comes closer to her, noticing the covered corpse in the car too.

"You seem to be alright?" Mikisugi asks. Ryuko can't really nod on that question.

"Honestly... no. I don't think any of us is alright." she answers and shows the scissor blades as she extends them. Senketsu seems down.

The scissor blades have taken damage, visible on the rifts on them. Due to the immensely high power Ryuko had to bring up to even scratch the Layer, it looks like the scissor blades were brought beyond their limits. It's a wonder that they were able to destroy the Life Fiber monument in the first place. But now, as all things go to an end, the Life Fibers inside are slowly seeing their end too. Without the Layer of the Entity, even them seem to lose power. It's just a matter of time until they dissolve. And once that happens, there is probably nothing that could threaten the Director, and he will not agree to peaceful methods. Not after everything that happened.

"Dads... scissor blades, they..."

"... and who's the dead one there?" he asks. Ryuko doesn't answer. Instead, she just shakes her head. When Mikisugi pulls up the cover, he finds Ragyo's corpse, and her, now quiet and calm but somehow sad face.

He gasps on that sight.

"Kiryuin?" he mentions quiet to himself as he sees the dead mother. He turns around.

"Is that...?"

"Mhm. She was the High Entity. Fooled all of us with her death. The Ragyo we knew wasn't the actual one, it was but a copy. She used this Life Fiber Sickness as Plan B. And this weirdo Ichiro must be an imitation of Nui the Life Fibers have produced just to have someone who can get their dirty work done. And then it wasn't even her actual mother. Ragyo only said that to make Nui think she'd belong to her one way or another.

Nui eventually shot her. That makes Satsuki the new High Entity. And what Satsuki orders will be done by the Life Fibers, no matter what."

"So they are not... hostile?"

"No. One of them is their leader. Maybe you wanna speak with him. He can speak our language. You'll notice very fast who it is, can't miss him." Ryuko mentions.

"And what will you do?"

"... I have to sit down for a moment." she mumbles quiet and walks away.

A few more minutes pass with preparations for an attack. In that time, scouts observe the Academy that lightens up in various intervals. Maiko's tank seems to run out of ammo. She's watching the situation with binoculars. Each hit destroys some of the Academy's walls, allowing entrances for the battle once the siege starts.

"Uhm... we're low on ammo!" Mataro yells to Maiko.

"How much rounds do we have left?"

"Maybe seven or eight?!"

"Grrr, great! Suppose we gotta choose carefully who we want to shoot next." the crazy mechanic says. In the distance, she can see Nudist Beach DTRs approaching them.

"Oh fun! Those nudists clowns are coming!" Maiko grins. A few soldiers of Nudist Beach arrive at the position shortly. With her binoculars, she takes a look at the camp, where she can see Mikisugi walk around, as he orders units to prepare themselves. When she notices Ryuko, she lets the binoculars fall.

"OH MY! RYUKO IS OVER THERE!"

"Ryuko is there!?"

"Cease fire! We have to visit the port!" Maiko yells into the tank. Said tank starts turning as fast as it can and cruises down to the city, with Maiko watching the units that remind of ants. It might take about 15 minutes until they arrive.

...

Mikisugi and a group of men arrive at the main street where they await Satsuki's return with the Life Fiber army that escorts her.

"Boss, uhm... what are we going to do?" one of the soldiers ask.

"... not sure."

"We don't have many people left, and they are all demoralized."

"I know."

"Should we even negotiate at all? I mean yeah, this Kiryuin girl is with them, but you know, isn't it a little... dangerous?"

Mikisugi closes his eyes for a moment. He can feel the steps of the Tower Fiber in the ground. Moments later, when he looks up, he can see Satsuki looking down on him and the others, and next to her is a being that seems to be hovering to the ground - this is Hinata. As he gently lands on the ground, a few humanoid Life Fibers and him approach Mikisugi. Dead Life Fiber cells fly around them slowly. Soon, the entire street is filled with Nudist Beach units on the left side, and Life Fibers on the right side, of which Nudist Beach is the more careful one, keeping their weapons ready.

Both parties watch each other carefully. The tension is dense when Hinata and Mikisugi both approach each other carefully. Life Fibers dissolve very slowly on the Life Fiber lord, showing that his end is coming soon too. His humanoid Life Fibers that follow him watch

Mikisugi's men and women carefully. Some of them hiss quietly in the background.

"... Aikuro... Mikisugi..." Hinata greets interested. Mikisugi musters Hinata - his pale skin that was devoured by Life Fibers points out that he himself was just another victim of the corruption spread by the parasites. There is barely any blood left in him. Maybe, if Ragyo's life would have not ended so soon, she may have become like this too. It might be that Hinata's personality has been influenced by Soichiro's, but he must have existed for far, far longer than one might believe. Centuries possibly. The human leader doesn't know how to react to the speaking Life Fiber.

"I do know your name for many years... we know you for a long time... like Dr. Matoi..." Hinata continues as he observes Mikisugi. Out of Hinata's eyes, dark blood flows out, very slowly, and only drop by drop, one or two each three minutes.

"... all your memories are hidden from us... but one..."

Mikisugi stays calm, while the Life Fibers sing a quiet chorus.

"You... are plagued by us... as everyone is plagued by us... and... we took you someone that was... important to you."

"Kinue." Mikisugi answers cold.

"Mm..."

Hinata and Mikisugi look at each other. When Hinata takes a few steps forward, the Nudist Beach units aim their guns and melee weapons at him.

"Blood is what keeps us alive... and evolution is what makes us stronger..."

"..."

"... and yet, all we can do now is to... ask for forgiveness... and for a way to find absolution in this darkest of nights..." Hinata continues. Sounds can be heard from Honnouji, if only quiet, but they deliver shivers among the humans. The Elite Four are watching from the camp.

The man is struggling. His body stance, his unsure face expression, his somewhat defeated appearance, and the heavy, slow breathing...

"We cannot undo what we did. All... we can do now is... hinder the one who is no longer one of us... that is all we can offer now. Our end... will arrive soon... as you can see." Hinata continues. Mikisugi looks at the Life Fibers.

Some of them dissolve slowly - still alive, but watching their own, slow death, that may not be painful, but hard to watch nonetheless. Those are the last ones with actual consciousness. He continues to listen.

"After all... we did, we could not... devour you... and now we are the ones that will be devoured."

"..."

"... all we can do now... is offer our bodies... in exchange for absolution."

"..."

"... we are already dead." Hinata ends melancholic. The Life Fibers all know their end is coming. Mikisugi watches the beings in the background. They all are afraid, even though you can't really see it. Their melodies are clear - melancholic, lonely, but accepting.

Mikisugi watches how in the background, a humanoid Life Fiber dissolves away. He sighs.

"... I..." he mumbles.

"If... it is your wish that we should leave you be... we will understand."

"... wait."

Hinata looks up to Mikisugi.

"I've seen what you are capable of. We all did. We all saw what kind of monsters you are... and if this Layer would still exist, you wouldn't stand here... you would maybe look down to us, fight us, devour us, as if we are food.

I can count on two hands the amount of people who would voluntarily work with you. Hell, even less. All this destruction you caused and the fear you brought upon these good people... you inflicted a wound on us that will never truly heal, even with a cure for the Life Fiber Sickness, and even with you all, ready to fight with us.

But I see your point.

You all will die soon, and you don't want to die as monsters, not in those last hours, isn't it so?" he asks. None of them answers. Silent agreement.

"Well... I remember Senketsu years ago. Life Fibers and humans can live together. Maybe they can. Maybe they can't. I've seen a lot of those that are like you.

It's against the principle of Nudism to agree on working with clothes. And yet we rely on it in all forms of materials - young Ryuko and Nui, who are hybrids, and Senketsu... and the Goku-Uniforms we had... I suppose this shows that we... we can come along, somehow.

We could possibly all die this night.

I'd rather die knowing that I was wrong about Life Fibers - that they aren't all just parasites. Nothing can change what you did in the past.

But that doesn't mean the future needs to be what the past is.

Okay.

I want these Life Fibers equipped with our gear - those may deserve redemption." Mikisugi orders his men. There is a slight tone of relief in his voice audible. Hinata's words sound honest, and when Mikisugi looks at all these desperate souls behind Hinata, he cannot help but think that there is something good in them left. Only very few are willing to actually help the Life Fibers prepare themselves for combat though. The moral is low, no one wants to really fight with them. And still, everyone knows that without the Life Fibers, there wouldn't be a chance of victory in the first place.

A group of Life Fibers carefully visits the camp. The big colossus follows them, yet he is very careful about not touching anything to not break Nudist Beach's equipment. The Tower Fiber stays outside, but watches down to the humans that take a closer look at him. It drops Satsuki to the ground carefully again.

Soon enough, Maiko's tank arrives at the camp as well. Maiko and the Mankanshoku family feels challenged, too much for them in the current situation, since all of a sudden, Life Fibers walk around here.

Ryuko's old friend continues to search for her, but can't find it between all the people and Life Fibers that get ready for the upcoming fight. Everyone is busy and stressed, and that makes Mako feel uncomfortable. Weapons, soldiers, then there is the bad smell in the air due to the destruction and death that was caused by the Entity in Tokyo... Mako isn't made for this, even if she has a high synchronicity with Life Fibers.

"Senketsu?" Ryuko asks her friend as she watches the Academy alone on the stairs outside of a warehouse.

"Yes?"

"Do you think... you might die too? I mean... the other Life Fibers will. Even the scissor blades won't take it much longer."

"I'm not sure. However, Ryuko, I'm not trying to waste the time we have with those thoughts. I never did, and it's not good to do so."

"I just don't want you to die like last time."

"I understand. I won't. Not this time. And if I do, then call me a liar, but I did my best."

"That's not funny."

"Sorry. I think we shouldn't try to bring up these memories of the past again, Ryuko. That's all I'm trying to say. You and I cannot forget what happened, but we don't need to bring it up the entire time, now do we?"

"I... guess so."

"Try to think of what will happen if we eventually win."

"I'll try. I'm sick of these battles. What kind of life is that anyway? Half my life consists of fighting, from normal school bullies to people in living clothes and actual aliens."

"A turbulent one. And even if it is challenging and painful at times, even depressing, you're glad to live it anyway, because only through that life you found your family, didn't you? At least that's what I think."

Ryuko thinks. After a short moment, she smiles briefly and nods.

"Yeah. That's true. Life can't always be good. But you live for the good stuff."

"Indeed."

They can hear steps.

"Ryuko?" she can hear Mako. Ryuko gasps hearing Mako's voice and turns around - she stands there with a slight smile.

"Mako..."

"Ryuko." Mako smiles and hugs Ryuko slightly, then looks up to her.

"What are you doing here?"

"Long story. Maiko brought her tank here and wanted to participate!"

"B-but you shouldn't be here, you don't even have any gear to protect your..."

"Pfft, what happened at Honnouji is something friends need to handle together, and we are friends, aren't we? Same class, same foes, but now we have a few new friends, like all these scary Life Fibers with their empty eyes... come to think of it, that really is scary, I said that as a joke but... wowie. Anyway! It's nice to do something together as friends again, isn't it? Even if it's risky and dangerous and we might die, but at least we die together!" Mako chuckles to cheer up Ryuko, who does leave a little smile once more. Her little friend notices Ryuko's wounds due to the battle with Ragyo though.

"But what happened to you?"

"I'll survive, don't worry. Mom just... kinda... she..."

"You mean... R-Ragyo?"

"Yeah, she was still alive. Kinda. I can't quite understand how, even though she explained it... everything's f'd up."

"And the others? What's with your sisters?"

"Satsuki's got hurt too, but Nui... is destroyed. Just found out the truth about everything. Now she's getting treated by the medics, she won't die but she won't be the same after this, I know this. I wouldn't be either..."

"... I'm so sorry."

"Do me a favour, Mako, please." Ryuko asks. Mako listens up.

"Satsuki and me, we... we gotta go very soon. Can you please take a look at my little sister? Just stay there for her. I know she's an asshole and not exactly sympathetic. I can't stay with her so I need someone who can. Can you do that for me?"

"Ryuko, I know she is not nice, she tried to kill me, remember? But she did not manage to and instead, she tried to protect me! Sure, she is scary but so are all the Nudist Beach soldiers with their weapons, and this Tsumugu guy too! And besides, everyone needs friends, so of course I will be there for her as a friend!"

"Thanks, Mako. I promise you when this is all over, we'll be able to spend time together again. Just do me this one favour."

Mako nods smiling.

"I'll watch over her. She did the same for me too, after all." Mako promises. Ryuko nods relieved.

"... good."

...

Iori, Houka, a few medics and even a Life Fiber Being - a humanoid - treat Nui. In the background, additional wounded people receive treatment. Houka observes her vital values while the medics put bandages on her, remove splinters or other external objects, and the Life Fiber Being hums a calming melody into her ear. Wounds are everywhere. Wounds inflicted by her adoptive mother and by the fall out of the Layer. Nui can only speak slowly and with pain.

When Satsuki looks around in the camp, all she can see is demoralized men and women. And the interior of the warehouse that is a hospital now feels the same. When she sees the little sister she

treated badly all the time, Satsuki cannot help but feel pity, and guilty. Lights aim onto Nui's body - the Life Fibers inside it are all transformed into a matter reminiscent of flesh, but not quite human, although it works the same.

The big sister walks next to Nui's head. She knows exactly Nui will not get away without mental damages. All she can do right now is cheer her up. Satsuki carefully touches her cheek and pats the soft hair.

"S... atsuki..." she mumbles afraid.

"Yes, Nui?" she asks and kneels down to her so that Nui can move her head to Satsuki's, now at the same height.

"... where's... Se... nketsu... and... Ry-uko..."

"Outside. Ryuko and me need to go soon. Mako and Iori will stay with you here. She just told me. You won't be alone."

"... I... ori?"

He clears his throat.

"Well... we share the same profession... and I'm not a fighter." he mentions in the background.

"... I... need to... see... Hi... na..."

"Why's that?"

"S-ur... prise."

"I'll let him know. But for the moment, don't think of us, just think of yourself. You've always been good at that, weren't you? Do that for me."

"... but... Ry... uko... and you, I... need to protect..."

"You can't protect us with those wounds, little sister. But I promise you, both Ryuko and me will come back alive. Promise me that when we come back, we don't have to dig a grave for you. That would make me angry. You wouldn't want to make me angry, right?" she asks carefully.

"... no..."

Satsuki smiles.

"You're strong. Stronger than me and Ryuko. I can see that. All..." she breathes in.

"... all I can be is sorry now." she continues as she breathes out.

"I... really... lo... ve... you."

"I love you too." she answers caring and sighs as she looks at the exit. When she walks to the entrance to leave the building, she looks back to Nui who's looking at her. Satsuki nods, and so tries Nui. With a slight smile, she leaves the building. Nui takes a deep breath and looks up again.

She's tearing up here and there, every once in a while, while the medics are trying to help her survive. The stitches, the needles that go into her - they used to be irrelevant to her. Threads that keep her together. With a little bit of will, she could have just regenerated all of her wounds. Nothing mattered, death was not knocking on the door as long as the opponent was not armed with material that could cut the Life Fibers she consisted of.

Knowing she is nothing special anymore, nothing "superior", nothing out of the ordinary but a simple human now plays with her mind. But it is what she wanted.

When the medics are done treating Nui's wounds all over her body, they move on to the next heavily wounded soldier. While Houka

moves on, Iori stays with Nui, as well as the Life Fiber Being that continues humming gently.

A few minutes later, Hinata enters the room and looks around the soldiers. His apathic appearing face expression hides a slight sympathy for the wounded ones, even if they are humans. However, after a few moments, he visits Nui.

"You... were searching for me?" he asks. Nui moves her hand carefully to make him come closer, close enough so that she can whisper something into his ear like organ that is a hole in his already strange looking head.

When she is done, Hinata looks down to Nui and nods, as if he would agree to something. He seems to materialize Life Fibers out of his body and robe, in several colors, similar to those Nui used to create her clones many years ago.

Hinata looks down. He's melancholic, bothered by his knowledge, bothered that his end will come soon. Nui breathes in and out heavily and puts the Life Fibers onto her chest to rest, and collect some blood. Iori seems worried for a moment, and when Hinata leaves, he speaks to Nui.

"What was that about?" he asks curious and removes his mask.

"... you'd... help... me if I... would... ask... r-right?"

"Of course. Friends do that, don't they?" he asks.

"... friends... mhm..."

"What would you need my help for?"

"... you're... almost... as good as of... a tailor... like me... still... I'm better, but... y'know... could need you for... what I had in... mind."

"As long as it doesn't involve killing people."

"... the opposite... this time."

"Alright." he answers and sits down. He seems a little exhausted by all the chaos around him. Nui moves a little bit to him and almost gets to lean her head next to his arm.

He starts blushing red slightly.

...

More time passes in the middle of the night. The Nudist Beach units have prepared themselves as good as they could for the fight, and boats have been readied, if not many. It's likely that they will be crowded. The Life Fibers can help carrying additional soldiers, but who would voluntarily take their help? Despite the Life Fibers attempts to appear not hostile, the soldiers can't fully trust them, but can they be blamed? There is a childish curiosity coming from the conscient parasites - that is proven when they watch a soldier clean his weapon for example. The large colossus and the Tower Fiber stand near the hospital - those two are the ones Nui asked to leave back in the Layer an hour or two ago.

Slowly but steady, more and more soldiers get into the boats - the rest enters the remaining helicopters or other sorts of amphibic vehicles. Those who are wounded stay out of the battle or support with long range weapons. While the humanoid Life Fibers cannot carry humans with them, they can at least transform their bodies by making their Fibers thinner than usual - that way it's easier for them to swim in the water. The colossus and the Tower Fiber can do the same. Still, a few Nudist Beach soldiers climb on them, and when they do, they cannot help but feel a strange acceptance coming from these things. They seem to be glad about the humans that give them a chance.

Mikisugi and Ryuko mix under the folk - the atmosphere is tense. Attacking Honnouji is dangerous due to the lack of proper equipment. The human leader can try to keep control of his men and women, and Hinata hums a quiet and calm sounding melody for his

Life Fibers, but the moral is bad and the tension between the parties challenging.

The more soldiers enter their boats, the harder it becomes to contain the moral on an acceptable level, and when the first soldiers start protesting, asking Mikisugi what the hell he was thinking when he seriously agreed to work with the Life Fibers, even if they had their good moments, everyone can hear a very noticable and well known click.

(AN: Y'all were waiting for this. You may wanna listen to Satsuki Kiryuin's theme from KKK on YouTube now.)

A heel click.

"SILENCE, EVERYONE!" Ira Gamagoori screams. Surprised, the soldiers, Ryuko and Mikisugi look to him, and then up to the Tower Fiber that is holding a little platform where Satsuki and her Elite Four look down.

"THE PRESIDENT OF REVOCS IS SPEAKING! YOUR RIGHT TO SPEAK IS REVOKED FOR THE TIME BEING!"

Ryuko smiles a bit when she notices the ice cold, piercing eyes of Satsuki who's genuinely angry about all the dissonance and conflicts among the units who, in their hatred for the Life Fibers, have forgotten that it's not them that are the evil ones right now, but the sick psychopath Director at Honnouji.

"All my eyes can see is the sight of weak cowards that are not ready to ally with those who try to redeem themselves - and you dare to speak badly of them on top of that?!" Satsuki yells angry. This lack of moral, this lack of resolve.

"Is this truly the organisation that wants to defend this world?! Who the hell do you think you are!?"

Everyone listens to Satsuki.

"You speak of enemies when they treat you when you are wounded, speak of monsters that want to devour us when instead, they openly apologize and admit to their failings, and speak of heartless creatures when they decide to help us save this world!

And now it's those who fought us, who saw us as food - it's those who are now on our side, who want to defend us, who want to make sure humanity's fate is a good one!

The enemy we have is a mighty one, he expects us and if we cannot defeat him here and today in Tokyo, just like back in Honnouji years ago, then this world will find an end, and it will be one most cruel - truly, all I see are sad, cowardish, crying children!

What gave Nudist Beach the strength it had years ago? Weapons? Armor? Rhetoric?

Ideals. Ideals gave Nudist Beach strength! The ideals to live free, free from all constraints - and if this organisation, after all it's victories, gives up on the world because the enemies it had try to find this freedom for themselves... then this world deserves to end!

But it will not!" she yells. Satsuki has a point.

"This world will not fall, this world still has a future and if this future is built on corpses, then I want to be one of them, if it means that the world can live on!"

We may be short on numbers and we may not be as strong as these monsters in the Academy, these abominations of this Doppelgänger, Director Harime, but if there is one thing that gives us the power we need, then it is truly our ideals that bond us into one unit, no matter what material we consist of, be it flesh or cloths!

For this one night, I expect loyalty, and I expect all of you to forge a bond that is stronger and beyond any prejudice and experience we've made in the past - only that way we can form the future we want, and only this way we can see the rising sun, in our bodies, in

our mind, and in our hearts, and not in the machines of this sick psychopath that looks down to all of us like vermin!

What organisation is it that I see here?"

"Nudist Beach!"

"Nudist Beach!"

"Nudist Beach!"

"Then get to work and show this maniac at Honnouji that he is dealing with the wrong humans AND Life Fibers!" Satsuki yells furious - motivated by these words, the soldiers begin their assault. The Tower Fiber helps Ryuko get up to her sister while the Elite Four spread out. Tsumugu and Mikisugi enter a boat as well.

The Tower Fiber puts Ryuko onto one of it's shoulders and does the same for Satsuki. She watches the colossus, a crab fiber and several other Life Fibers approaching the water, as well as the soldiers who start moving.

"Satsuki!"

"Ryuko."

"Like old times, huh?"

"I suppose I will never get rid of this behaviour."

"As long as it helps us stay alive."

"Yes. We'll bring this to an end."

"You ready for this, Senketsu?"

"Always."

Ryuko transforms with Senketsu. Satsuki looks at her spear. Junketsu is whispering quietly, but she cannot hear him well. It's his distorted, grotesk voice. Ryuko's scissor blades are heavily damaged, it might be enough for one or two more fights and enemies but without someone who knows who could repair these hardened Life Fibers, they will be destroyed.

The Tower Fiber slowly enters the water. Even though the water is deeper than his body's size, he can stay on the surface by doing slow arm movements. It makes it look like he's walking on the water. That way, Ryuko and Satsuki can stay on the shoulder while having a safe hold.

...

On top of the Academy, the Director looks down to the approaching units. Some of the Life Fibers on the top await their orders. A Couturier visits him.

"Director..." the Couturier says.

"They're coming... what should we do?" he asks curious. Ichiro sighs angry and walks to the end of the top where he can see the red plate that, as it's thrown into the courtyard of the Academy, grows in size, until it lights up. The Life Fibers on the walls watch the plate.

Ichiro rips open his arm - Life Fibers seek for a connection. In it, he tears apart a few strings that appear to be Entity Fibers, or something similar. Removing those strings, he drops them from the top and lets them fall into the plate.

The Fibers fuse with the plate. Ryuko and Satsuki see a large, red light appearing in the distance inside the sunken courtyard, and suddenly, a large, red beam like object that pierces the sky, painting it red, with Life Fibers falling from it, appears.

And lastly, a hellish, tormented scream can be heard, screams that remind of the ones of the humans that have been processed into Life

Fibers, all in an effort to terrorize the incoming Nudist Beach units. The walls that are corrupted with Life Fibers start to gain consciousness, and strange objects in various forms leave them.

Whatever the Director did, he must have used the Life Fibers inside the courtyard to finally activate the defenses of the Academy, and this explains why he infested it in the first place - so that, in case everything goes wrong, he has a plan B ready. The beam's scream disappears, yet an uncalm melody leaves it. This might not be Shinra Seisei, but if the beam displays such an incredible power that it causes the ocean to shudder and the Life Fibers to gain consciousness, then the Director must have worked on a weapon that needs to be stopped as soon as possible.

"What is going on over there?" Senketsu is asking.

In front of Ryuko, Life Fibers fall from the sky, like mortars. The beam projects lightnings that hit the surrounding Life Fibers under Ichiro's command - seemingly mutating and transforming them into all sorts of things, and even walls that hinder the attackers from coming closer. Couturiers, former humans turned into Life Fibers, are now turned into all sorts of objects, even walls - the Director has no sense of empathy or moral. Incoming attacks cannot harm the walls made out of former humans. Ryuko and Satsuki saw something similar years ago against Ragyo already.

It appears that this beam is a source of Life Fibers, or worse, a source of developing Life Fibers into something more horrifying.

Maiko watches the attack at the port with Mako and the rest. Nui can barely stand.

"This... maniac..." she mumbles.

"What did he do?" Iori asks.

"I think he... gave up the... E-Entity Fibers... inside him... just to make... another weapon."

"What, a few little Life Fibers can make an entire beam that spits out more evil Life Fibers!?" Maiko asks.

"Can we destroy that beam somehow? Or help them?" Iori continues. Maiko bites her teeth together and rubs her hands.

"... this tank still has some ammo left, I wonder how well a tank can do against that thing!" she laughs.

...

It's like the Director is starting to lose his mind, at least that's what Senketsu's thinking. He doesn't know it, but it definitely cannot be planned that Ichiro tries to bring a more powerful version of Shinra Koketsu onto this world just to, in the end, not do it and instead create a different weapon that may not be as powerful as such but enough to leave its mark on the world if it's not stopped - and the worst thing in all of this is that this weapon is made out of former humans, processed into monsters, and thrown away like trash. The insane psychopath tries everything to take down Nudist Beach.

The longer the beam stays active, the more walls and grounds on the Academy are infested with hardened Life Fibers that can barely be pierced, if at all. Under water, Life Fibers leave the Academy to attack the boats.

The first boats arrive at the ruins, but on the walls, Couturiers are deformed by the beam that hits them with lightnings. Various limbs grow on them, such as a third arm on their torso that is already destroyed and full of holes. Shots are fired, and the few DTR's left by Nudist Beach attack the Life Fibers from the distance while the allied Life Fibers transform their bodies to protect the humans.

The humans that do arrive at the ruins look for cover, and if none is to be found, the allied Life Fibers act as such, after all, they can take the damage easily. Wounded humans are treated - their blood in exchange for regenerating skin and healing organs as good as

possible, should they be harmed. And they heal faster than any medic in Nudist Beach.

The Tower Fiber is being attacked by the Life Fibers in the sky, and he decides to let Ryuko and Satsuki fall into his sharp hand, then closing it carefully so that they won't be harmed by the incoming attacks.

Mikisugi and Tsumugu reach the fortress via their own boat and soldiers, and when the gates open, they move to a destroyed wall and observe the situation.

The sunken courtyard is filled with swimming Life Fibers, the water around the beam seems to heat up. On the walls, they can see hostile Couturiers and other abominations caused by the Director's beam. He doesn't care for his underlings, all he wants is to win. Without proper artillery, Nudist Beach cannot damage the beam, they would need large calibre weapons, and the DTR's can deal only minor damage.

The density of the beam seems to be thick, the Life Fibers must have cut themselves into hardened Fibers.

"We gotta find a way to get this beam down and take over the ruins!" Mikisugi orders his men. Tsumugu orders his own group of men to find cover. The Life Fibers on Ichiro's side use this need for cover - since the covers and walls are infested for the most part, they are not entirely safe, and soon, the Nudist Beach units realize that they are being attacked by the walls itself. Only the DTR's are fully protected by the monsters. When the units realize that, they slowly go back to their boats, which are also death traps, due to the Life Fibers underwater that try to destroy them.

Nonon, who's further away and on a boat, tries to play music with her Life Fiber cohort, but the hostile aliens that attack from the sky make this attempt extremely difficult. Gamagoori and Sanageyama are able to break through the defense on at least one part of the walls. Water slams against them. The Tower Fiber on which Ryuko

and Satsuki stand on is focused and takes damage by the beam itself as it starts attacking it. One of its lightning like attacks hit the hand Ryuko and Satsuki stand on. The hit severs the hand from the arm and lets it fly through the air, with both sisters struggling to find a safe hold as they are launched into the Academy's courtyard.

As they finally fall into the water, Ryuko and Satsuki quickly escape the destroyed hand and swim onto one of the broken concrete platforms in the water. They try to take a look at the situation, but it's difficult in this chaos. The weather conditions are bad and since the water is uncalm and wavy, it's hard for them to maneuver inside the courtyard that is already filled with monsters that watch them, and somehow try to reach them.

When Ryuko and Satsuki arrive on one of the walls that lead into a breach directly leading into the academy, they are attacked by hostile, deformed Couturiers. It seems like they lost control of their bodies due to the beam, and when they take too much damage, they seem to rage. Those wounded, deformed Couturiers start raging as they see their wounds inflicted by the scissor blades or Satsuki's, with Junketsu infused spear. The longer their rage goes on, the more the monsters dissolve - it's their own rage that kills them eventually. And when they do die, they die with an explosion that scatters Life Fibers all around them with high velocity. Considering that, it might be more dangerous killing them than leaving them alive.

Only carefully, Ryuko and Satsuki can combat their way through the walls. Life Fibers leave the Academy out of the various windows and breaches inside the wall. The damaged Tower Fiber and the allied Nudist Beach units, as well as the colossus and the other large Life Fiber units have a hard time getting a good position on the area.

The closer both sisters come to the actual Academy, the stronger the defensive measures become. At the entrances into the main building, Life Fibers have melted with the walls and created barriers made out of very thin and fast moving threads that try to attack everyone who's coming too close to them. Those fast movements are strange and horrifying to look at due to the high speed - it's hard

to process if one is not used to these movements. In his madness, Ichiro is working with terror just to get the humans to surrender.

When more units arrive on the ruins, all of a sudden, the walls break and a swarm of Life Fibers appears - conscient and fast, and they must have been hidden in the halls under the Academy too. Satsuki and Ryuko are being attacked by that swarm. Even though both of them can defend each other, the swarm is horrifying, fast, and if Satsuki isn't careful, she might be cut apart by it, hence why Ryuko acts more protective and defensive than usual.

"Satsuki, stay away from this thing!" Ryuko yells while Satsuki is busy fighting off a Couturier.

"We need to get into the building fast!" she answers as she eliminates the monster and turns to Ryuko. Arriving at the entrance, the swarm falls next to it and various screams can be heard, and a dark hiss leaving it. Ryuko and Satsuki, threatened by that, take a few steps back, but there is no time to develop a proper plan against this new monster, and all of a sudden, Ryuko is "grabbed" and devoured by the monster.

"Ryuko!" Satsuki yells. Life Fibers are torn away by the scissor blades, the Being screams and makes irrational moves, of which one hits Satsuki and slams her away several meters, wounding her slightly. When she looks up, she can see how the monster spits out Ryuko. It slams her away, but into the building. Ryuko rams the scissor blades into the wall - there is an entrance under her. She looks for Satsuki but cannot find her in the chaos, but there is no time to lose, and it makes Ryuko jump from the wall.

"Senketsu!" Ryuko calls her friend and shrinks the scissor blades. She cannot reach the entrance with her normal physical appearance, so instead, she and Senketsu liquify into Life Fiber matter. They deform themselves with it and reach the hole. This way, they are able to enter the Academy. When Satsuki stands up to grab her weapon, she can only see Ryuko disappearing in the Academy.

The beam on Satsuki's right is getting more and more instable and the abominations it creates more ugly and brutal, until the Couturiers that are deformed take forms that cannot be described any longer, as they are way too complex, too hard to process, and even Satsuki, who has a strong will and mind, has a hard time looking at them. They are far too alienating. And still, she needs to find a way through the walls and into the Academy on her own now to catch Ryuko who's likely on her way to combat the Director and end this madness.

Sure is only that there is no time to lose now.

AN: Hope you guys had fun with this part, soon, part 2 will be done. I got the chapter cover and all ready. ;)

Like A Thistle, With Proud Thorns 2-2

AN: Hey. I hope y'all are doing well. I'm really sorry this took so long, this chapter should have been done far earlier already, FAR FAR earlier, like weeks ago! Buuuut school kept me busy. But at last it's done. Whew. This is the final battle. I hope you enjoy it! As always, I appreciate a review. After this, there will be one more chapter. Maybe an alternate ending too. We'll see. For now... let us see how this nightmare ends. Thanks for waiting so patiently. :) Oh and I HIGHLY recommend you listen to the tracks for this chapter.

In the halls of Honnouji, strange melodies and hissing can be heard, behind the walls and inside the various rooms. Life Fibers crawl along the walls, move slowly into little rifts and openings, the louder the steps hall through the halls. The humanoid Life Fibers and Couturiers watch Ryuko and Senketsu as they open the doors that lead into the higher parts of the Academy.

Ryuko and Senketsu look around with a grim gaze, exhausted and still persistent enough to take on another fight, if it means that they can avoid a possible catastrophe. The attacks outside due to Nudist Beach and the Life Fibers shatter the walls, and every now and then, Ryuko and her friend can feel in their feet and shoes how everything here is falling apart the longer the battle goes on. It's nothing but a ruin from past days, and these two, along with their friends and family, have come to finally bury these days, as painful as they were and as they still can be.

No matter the cost, Ichiro has to be stopped, one way or another. The sick Director would do everything to break humanity, and if Ryuko can't get to him, he might come up with ideas that will ultimately take down all of Nudist Beach. He won't stop until everything is dead.

The halls inside are to Ryuko's and Senketsu's expectation rather dark and badly lighted. Water filled up some of the rooms, and plants

cultivated inside the ruins. As they move on, they enter one of the many long halls that lead to the class rooms. On their left, various class rooms can be entered, on their right, they see the windows, of which most of them are broken. Ryuko watches the battle outside for a brief moment. Satsuki cannot be seen.

Her big sister is certainly not in a good spot, and her wounds and the shocking revelations hours ago played with her. Now she's trying to go back to her old behaviour, as cold hearted leader - to motivate Nudist Beach and the Life Fibers on their side. And yet, it might be the last way she knows of that could bring back her will and resolve, at least for a while. After all, everything is breaking apart around her, her mother lived years after her assumed death, Nonon is heavily wounded and still in danger due to her participation in the battle, and the monstrosities on the battlefield are things no human should need to see. And now she is separated from Ryuko - still, Ryuko needs to move on.

As Ryuko moves on, she finds her old class room to her left. It can barely be entered however, as well as the club rooms. What's left is the sewing club Iori led. When she enters it, there isn't much to see, except for humanoid Life Fibers that hiss as they see her, and watch her with their dead eyes. Water runs into Ryuko's boots. On the other side of the room, a projectile from Nudist Beach breaks apart the wall, and some of the Life Fibers are slammed away. Ryuko takes a few steps back and moves on.

"They don't attack us... but why?" Senketsu wonders.

"I don't know."

"We should wait for Satsuki, Ryuko."

"And let this dickhead up on the top come up with even more crazy stuff? I don't feel comfortable with this either, but if we don't distract him, he'll end up killing everyone. He may be mortal now thanks to the Scissor Blades, but he's smart... and I ain't gonna take that risk anymore."

"Are you sure you want to give up one risk to take up another? In your current state, you should rather wait."

"I know. But you know me, Senketsu. And you know that nothing stops me, not even wounds. Hell, people can try to cut me in half, it ain't gonna work. Remember?"

"... yes. At least we should try to keep him talking for as long as possible and start the battle late, just to keep you prepared and give Satsuki more time to meet up."

"Yeah, that's the plan."

"Good... that's good."

"Senketsu, I know you are a lil afraid."

"... but so are you."

"... yeah." Ryuko answers and takes a deep breath as she continues walking through the halls of Honnouji.

...

Mikisugi and Tsumugu in the meantime try with their companions to keep their defense up and prepare an assault onto the Academy's walls. They are able to conquer certain parts of the walls, but the Life Fibers in exchange become all the more brutal and dangerous for that. It goes so far that the beam, the "source", starts slamming Life Fibers against them, to kill Nudist Beach soldiers and to break the walls, forcing Nudist Beach to find different ways to approach the insides of the large building. This beam might be sentient itself, if it can actively react to Nudist Beach's movement. Either that or it's controlled by Ichiro or someone else.

When a group of soldiers and Life Fibers, as well as Tsumugu, try to make a move on the Life Fibers defense, the beam attacks them, and water fills the gap it caused on the wall. Life Fibers crawl out of

the gap and move towards the allied units - on the other side, Couturiers are deformed by the beam, even fusing into one being, made out of many.

Several bodies become one, and it looks terrifying. Wherever you look at, arms, legs, broken body parts, everything is deformed, disharmonic, and the more Couturiers are hit by the beam and processed, the larger the monster becomes - so tall, that even Gamagoori gains respect for it, biting his teeth as he sees it.

Nonon and her Life Fibers come closer to the Academy and prepare their instruments. Still, the hostile Life Fibers make it difficult for her to support Nudist Beach. Houka, Sanageyama and Gamagoori can't score a proper progress in the battle - they lose more and more units. And even the own Life Fibers can't take damage forever.

Satsuki on the other side of the Academy fights her way through the ruins, yet she cannot afford a battle against multiple foes much longer. Each battle drains on her strength, and after all the wounds she suffered from the last hours, and the revelations she experienced, her speech was the last real push of will and resolve she had left. The longer Ryuko and Satsuki are separated, the harder it gets for her. During a fight with a Couturier, she takes a hit on her shoulder armor, ripping it apart and causing a bleeding wound. Life Fibers try to crawl onto the wound - Satsuki pushes them away. It burns however. The swarm protects the walls of the Academy, forcing Satsuki to approach far more carefully than she'd like.

The ocean around the Academy starts to turn red slowly, as the source grows bigger and stronger, and more Life Fibers falling into. Do the Life Fibers try to pest the ocean? In any case, it only proves the thought that Ryuko and Satsuki need to take down Ichiro before he can gain bigger use of the source, the large beam that infests everything and everyone here in the first place. Through a little gap, Satsuki finds a way to quickly approach the Academy. However, that gap is filled with debris, and it forces her to crawl through a little hole,

just big enough for her. It's better than nothing, but takes time nonetheless.

From the distance, the sound of a large gun being fired is heard. Satsuki turns her head and looks up to the coast, where she can see Maiko and her tank crew fire at the source. One of their shots hits the beam - this causes a monstrous scream coming from it. The sky lights up for a brief moment. It looks like the beam took damage indeed, but as it takes damage, it also apparently turns more and more hostile, manifesting into new lightning like strikes. Satsuki uses that distraction to climb out of her gap and continue her assault.

"Hahaha! Didn't expect this tank to have more of a use than just catching dust!" Maiko laughs dirty and slams her hands onto the tank while she's looking out of the hatch. Iori observes the battle from the insight via a window, Mako and the others maintain the gun and Nui sits in the corner of the tank.

"Never thought... this stupid... weapon project... has a use..." Nui mumbles.

"OH SHOOT!" Maiko yells and goes into cover as the beam attacks with something similar to a lightning strike. This causes an explosion in the water, slamming the tank away a few meters.

"They're shooting back, they're shooting back!" Mako yells panicky and jumps around in the tank, shakes Iori's shoulders, then Nui's, then climbs onto Maiko and as another strike emits, Mako drags Maiko back into the tank. The strike flies above them. Maiko looks up again, watches how the strike lands into the coast, then turns to Mako and grabs her shoulders now.

"BACK INTO THE TANK, SOLDIER, WE HAVE A WAR TO WIN!" Maiko yells. Mako smiles intimidated and jumps back to Barazo inside the tank.

"Ohh, if I would have known this could turn so dangerous I would have made more croquettes!" Sukuyo mumbles worried. Nui crawls

inside the tank until she takes a look through one of the windows. The Life Fibers attack the ships close to the Academy, dragging all the humans inside down into the water.

Satsuki approaches the building, gets closer and closer, however, the swarm noticed her. Via the grappling hook on her arm, she can drag down loose walls which slows the swarm down a bit. They seem to scream her name, even though it's hardly to understand. Via a ramp a few meters in front of her, she could gain momentum by running up and using the grappling hook - she'd then be able to reach the Academy.

This idea works, and while Sanageyama and Gamagoori try to distract the swarm with their own units, Satsuki can get into the building, even though it's just the flooded lower levels. It'll take a while until she is able to reach Ryuko.

...

From the top of the Academy, only the screams of the soldiers, Life Fibers, shots, the blades, and the hisses of the monsters can be heard. Ichiro's coat waves in the wind that moves due to the source, and the snow slowly turns red. The battle can be observed perfectly well from this view - Mikisugi and Tsumugu, Gamagoori, Nonon, who prepares her Life Fibers, and the tank... everything can be seen.

But all this brutality doesn't create not even a slight smile in Ichiro anymore. He'd normally enjoy the gaze of his enemies dying and suffering, but ever since the Layer died, and ever since the Entity has vanished and him losing his eye, the "fun" disappeared entirely.

At the edge of the top, he looks down to everyone - and in his remaining eye, emptiness and darkness is left. It doesn't matter what happens. All that matters is chaos and destruction.

And then, the doors 20 meters behind him opens. Ryuko and Senketsu have arrived.

"Your game is over, Ichiro!" Ryuko yells to him. He turns his head a little bit to the side, so that he can see her with his intact eye.

The young woman rams the scissor blades into the ground. With grim gaze, she watches the maniac.

"Whatever you do, you've lost, and you know that exactly. But knowing you... you'd never give up.

If anything, you really are her Doppelgänger. Except that my sister... still has her heart somewhere..."

For a moment, both stare at each other, the sounds vanish. Only the wind and the beam is audible. But eventually, Ichiro turns around entirely. Ryuko notices he was holding his scythe behind his coat the entire time, and only when he actually turned around, it got visible. Both his hands are on the tip of the scythe.

He breathes in and out with his nose.

"There was a time, Matoi, where I thought humans are a valuable resource. Whatever my Doppelgänger and Kiryuin thought... I thought I can and will do it better. That's what I was supposed to be. To be better.

This world was supposed to be so much more. A home. Food. Maybe the best of both. But what does it matter?

You speak of me losing when I never won anything at all. Nothing meaningful." he asks. His mutilated face causes discomfort in Senketsu - no wonder Nui made an eyepatch back then.

Ichiro throws his coat away, wearing nothing but his pink vest and yellow trousers, which are stained with blood, due to his eye wound.

"But with you... there will be a meaning."

"You ain't gonna get me and Senketsu."

"Senketsu... how you hang on him, just simple clothes, conscient... don't people grow out of them? Didn't you... grew out of him?"

"He ain't clothing. He ain't a friend. There's a human in him..."

Ichiro chuckles briefly.

"You are such a fascinating abomination, Matoi. Hybrids are the worst... worse than humans. But..." he continues and stabs the sense once into the ground slightly. The ground crumbles.

"... no matter what I do and no matter how much I do it, somehow you still destroyed everything I tried to accomplish. You don't give up. You're like a fortress in the storm - you won't break apart.

That's admiring."

Nonon and the Life Fibers start playing music, motivating the allied Life Fiber forces. The ground under Ryuko and Ichiro breaks apart, letting them fall, yet both stand easily and land in Satsuki's presidential office.

(AN: Listen to "Kill La Kill IF - Senketsu Kisaragi Theme" on YouTube until the next track appears. ;)

"The world is a big garden. And in the middle of that garden, there is you. You stand there. Like a thistle... with proud thorns.

But you will wither too... and if it is the last thing I do." he smiles dark and transforms into liquid Life Fibers, attacking Ryuko with an surprise attack. She quickly blocks off the attack and jumps back, kicking the large table in the middle of the room into his direction. Ichiro slices the table into two parts and charges at her.

Both try to take the upper hand in this fight, block each other well, but it's clear that Ryuko can't fight Ichiro as well as she used to, due to the scissor blades that took damage, and the energy lost

throughout the night. Thanks to Senketsu she stays resolved though - Satsuki will come, it just takes some more time.

"Whatever you did to destroy the Entity, but I'll make sure you will suffer for it, Matoi."

"Ryuko, he won't stop attacking you until you lack the energy to even raise the scissor blades! Stay careful and stay away from him, you have to make him struggle!" Senketsu pleads. Ryuko slams Ichiro away from her and walks a few steps back, through the destroyed office. Ichiro hits the ground of the room with his scythe and slashes it open, causing Life Fibers to leave the end of the weapon and attacking Ryuko - she and Senketsu are capable of fighting them off, it gives Ichiro time to attack her with an overhead slash though.

"It's the Entity's fault that it's gone! Everything catches up to you, sooner or later you'll have to face the things you did in the past, both the good and bad!" Ryuko yells and parries an attack, almost hitting Ichiro with the followup.

"Shit, I did some busted stuff too, but you son of a bitch really ask for a kick in the ass, just like old times! I ain't gonna let you hurt anyone anymore, not again!" she continues to attack.

"This is for everyone you've hurt!" she screams and hits Ichiro slightly on the shoulder, mumbling annoyed, yet incomprehensible.

"So brave..." he says and patiently awaits Ryuko's next attack, and due to him expecting it, he parries it and hits Ryuko with his fist, causing her to stumble back.

"Where's your sister? Is she dead? Has she been eaten already?!"

"You'll be surprised!" Ryuko answers and avoids an attack. When Ichiro follows up, Ryuko and Senketsu liquify into two halves. The scythe goes directly between them, and it surprises the psychopath for a brief moment. Ryuko materializes again and hits his back with her scissor blade. He groans annoyed and slashes furiously behind

him, almost catching Ryuko with his scythe. She jumps behind Satsuki's chair.

"Ehehe... doesn't that bring up great memories, fighting in this building, Matoi? Don't you love to fight? That's why you exist in the first place, haha! Humans, Life Fibers, who cares, in the end, you're not made to live, you're only made to serve and be a weapon, just like your Kamui and just like me!"

"I can be more than that and I am more than that! Senketsu will always be more than a sailor's uniform! And if I learned one thing, then that there are Life Fibers out there that aren't pure monsters, unlike you!"

"Clothing stays clothing, Matoi, doesn't matter if it's acting like a human or not! You shouldn't have desired him that much, then maybe today you'd still have your sweet arms! Though black fits you faaaaaar better!" he laughs just to attack with the scythe once again. Ryuko blocks and moves the weapon down to the ground, along with hers, creating red waves that both blast them away. She can ready herself faster than Ichiro as she stands up and hits him, cutting open his torso slightly - he starts bleeding, and Life Fibers become visible.

Annoyed by that hit, he takes a calmer, more defensive posture, holding the scythe behind his back. The hit motivates Ryuko and attacks once more.

"You better take your Life Fiber goons and piss off before you'll regret it!"

"After you are dead, maybe." he smiles sinister. Ichiro blocks off an incoming attack and looks into Ryuko's face.

"I didn't come so far just so that a fun brake like you will destroy everything - oh no, I won't let this mistake happen, not like my lil Doppelgänger. You will fall, one way or another, I'll make sure you will do the first mistake and when that happens, nothing but scraps of cloths will be left of you because that is exactly what you are,

hybrid!" he threatens and attacks several times, fast and unpredictable. Ryuko can block off those attacks, but the more she blocks them off, the harder it becomes for her to protect Senketsu as well, and Ichiro uses the gap in her defense to slam the scissor blades aside and attack Senketsu's eye. He rams the scythe directly into Senketsu's open eye and rips it open. Life Fibers leave it, and blood, when the scythe goes deeper into it and piercing open Ryuko's shoulder.

Senketsu screams tormented, and Ryuko, who took a hit as well, moans painful, her defense falls, and Ichiro uses this additional moment of weakness to rip open a wound into Ryuko's body, diagonal, from the torso up to her intact shoulder. The young woman slams against the window wall behind the president's chair, coughs, stays resolve though.

"I won't give up so quick, you bastard!" is what she yells, although Senketsu's pain makes her tear up. Despite that, she tries to stand resolve and strong.

"Perhaps I will use the cells and Life Fibers left of you to turn you into actual clothes. I wonder what would be the best attire to apply for you?" he wonders loud and waits excited for another reaction from Ryuko.

...

As Satsuki runs through the halls of her old Academy, she takes the way through the large auditorium, used in case the weather ruined any possibilities to perform speeches outside on the courtyard. Her footsteps echo throughout the Academy and halls, and other than that, she can only hear the exquisite, quiet hissing of the Life Fibers that reside there now. At the end of the immensely large and rather empty auditorium, filled with water and plants, she spots the stairs that lead to the highest floors of the Academy and the class rooms where Ryuko was before.

Reaching those stairs however results in an surprise she did not hope to confront. All of a sudden, the ceiling above her breaks apart and out of the 40 meters height, a large man appears... and it seems like it's Gamagoori, although not the Gamagoori she used to remember. Instead, it is the Gamagoori created by Hoomaru years ago. The one Ichiro brought back when he arrived.

He and the other Elite four copies serve as guardians of this building, as if Ichiro is trying to imitate and taunt her, by creating his own Elite four. With a grim gaze, Gamagoori looks down to Satsuki, and when Satsuki prepares her weapon, additional steps from all around her can be heard.

Someone lands behind her - it's Sanageyama, who's looking up to Satsuki with an sinister expression in his face. On her left, the air seems to flicker, and as she looks closer to it, Houka is revealed.

And lastly, a drum can be heard on her right. Satsuki turns to it.

"Lady Satsuki!" Nonon says with an smuggy expression.

"How very lucky do I have to be to be honored that you visit my concert! Don't you love the screams and the shots outside? The blades that slam against these strings the Life Fibers are made of?"

"Grrr..."

"I've recalculated the threat the Life Fibers were to us. My expectations were not disappointed - Lady Satsuki, I suggest an upgrade of yourself. Your physical and psychological capabilities will be increased."

"This is the fight I've been waiting for all these years. You ain't gonna run away, Lady Satsuki. Ain't nothing gonna stop me from defeating you this time."

"Lady Satsuki - it is disappointing to see you gave up our cause for a life in pain, with a body that cannot endure... however, since you

desired this life, I shall do my very best to satisfy you and your needs, until all of your bones are broken and all of your muscles torn apart!"

Satsuki closes her eyes for a moment. Then she turns to Gamagoori.

"... try it." she threatens and holds her spear ready. All four are waiting for Satsuki's first move, and Satsuki does start by faking out an attack, screaming briefly. Gamagoori misinterpretes this as an attack and tries to counter by attacking with his whip, yet, due to Satsuki awaiting this, she is able to cut the whip into two and slash his body open with the spear. Houka turns invisible again, Nonon walks a few steps away and summons instruments out of her regalia. With these three being busy, Sanageyama attacks Satsuki in the middle of the hall, and both commence melee combat.

"You won't defeat me this time, Lady Satsuki!"

Nonon in the meantime starts playing music - notes leave her instruments, homing at Satsuki's direction. Satsuki uses them as a means of holding Gamagoori back by slamming the notes with her weapon into his direction to pressure him, all while defending herself from Sanageyama's slash attacks.

Houka eventually appears next to her and performs kicks, which however works worse than he expected. Satsuki avoids Sanageyama's hits and uses his attacks to make him accidentally hit his ally, tearing apart the foot from his left leg. Houka stumbles and goes invisible again, leaving little blue cubes that hover around.

Then, Satsuki punches Sanageyama's face and runs into Nonon's direction, who jumps up scared seeing her foe coming closer and closer. She plays her music more panicky than before.

"No, no no no no NO, wait a moment, Lady Satsuki!" she yells surprised and aims her conductor stick onto the ground. A note then lands onto the ground before Satsuki and makes it explode, launching Satsuki away from Nonon. And all of a sudden, Nonon

feels pretentious and strong again, stating her panic was only played.

"HAHA! GUESS YOU COULD SAY THE BASS HAS BEEN DROPPED!"

Satsuki lands carefully on the ground again and notices the blue cubes Houka left flying into her direction. When one of them collapses with a note, the note glitches and becomes bigger. It splits into several smaller versions. It seems as if Houka's cubes can alter the physical properties of an object.

"Too tough for you to fight me, Satsuki?" Sanageyama asks provoking and attacks once more.

"I don't have time for this..." she mumbles angry. Nonon jumps onto one of the notes and continues to play her music along Houka who's throwing cubes out of the shadows. Gamagoori pulls out another whip and hits Satsuki's back that causes her to bleed slightly. She kneels onto the ground for the moment, bites her teeth together, and when Sanageyama approaches her, she slams her spear up and rips his torso open - however, he stays resolve and continues his attack, which Satsuki eventually has to avoid, and she does by doing a roll.

Gamagoori jumps at Satsuki, trying to hit her with his fist from above, Satsuki jumps to the side.

"You will be punished for your sins, Lady Satsuki! Your cause is sinful and you will be purified with these fists and these whips!" he yells and attacks one more time. He turns to Satsuki and attacks her once more with the fist.

To his surprise though, she holds off the fist with her bare hand, looking grim at him.

"What...?"

"You cannot defeat me." she says angry and lets off of him, letting him stumble to the side. Satsuki rams her spear into his upper body and uses all the strength she has left to drag him up with it. Then, she turns around once and launches him with the spear against the wall, even though this drains her energy heavily. Gamagoori flies out of the hall and lands somewhere in the ocean, with nothing but a scream that can be heard.

"Haha, look at that loser!" Nonon laughs and continues, being supported by Houka, while Satsuki faces off Sanageyama now...

...

Maiko's tank closes the distance to the Academy and drives around it in circles to avoid Life Fiber attacks. Their ammo is close to be empty though.

"Hey, ain't it maybe a good idea to fall back and get some more, I don't know, ammo?!" Mataro asks grinning when he feels the water under his feet. Maiko climbs into the tank and closes the hatch above her.

"Fall back!? Ain't no falling back on my frontline, mister!" Maiko answers and increases the tank's speed until it's as fast as possible. The Life Fibers under the tank that try to find ways into it by scratching open the metal with their heat produced by the energy in them have it much harder to success, and they fall off of it to drown and die in the deeps of the ocean.

The tank cruises next to Mikisugi, Tsumugu and the others - unfortunately though, the swarm gets aware of them and attacks them. Life Fibers sit down onto the hatch and increase the weight of the vehicle which makes it dive down into the water. After a minute, the water inside the tank is high enough that it reaches everyone's hips.

Mako stays inside the water while Mataro climbs onto her shoulders to aim with the gun, while he's keeping his tongue outside. Nui and

Iori try to close the gaps inside the armor with Life Fibers, but their efforts seem to be of little success.

"Ohhh, I think someone's trying to visit us and we don't even have a cake!" Mako mumbles worried when she notices a few Life Fibers falling through the hatch into the tank.

Maiko tries to move the tank to the side and uses the strong waves to make the tank sink further - since the swarm is partially glued onto them, the Life Fibers hit by the waves and water would fall into it and drown, although this move is highly dangerous. The tank can barely be controlled at this point, and Maiko tries everything to stay close to the Academy so that once it crashes, no one will drown just like that.

In the end, the tank does crash next to the wall and breaks apart - when this happens, Maiko slams her head against the wall and starts bleeding badly. She loses her orientation and consciousness, mumbles around and eventually falls onto the ground.

"Maiko!?" Mako mumbles worried.

"I can fix her!" Barazo says and picks her up, escaping with the unconscious Maiko, while Mataro, Mako and Sukuyo help each other already. Iori helps Nui get out of the tank as well, and the group escapes onto the broken Academy walls while the tank behind them sinks into the water.

...

(AN: On YouTube, listen to "KILL WA ILL" from KKK.)

Ryuko blocks off Ichiro's scythe and makes him hit the wall. When he pulls out the scythe, Ryuko attacks with the scissor blades and rips open his body, making him moan painfully. The Life Fibers that hang out of his body are torn away by him, as if they're simple bugs that feast on him. Ryuko loses her energy however, and the wounds burn painful.

"... ohhhh how I wish we'd have some time just for us alone so that I could make you suffer... and whenever you die I could just bring you back, just to kill you over and over again..." he chuckles and attacks surprisingly. Ryuko avoids his attack. Both stand in the middle of the room.

"You can't stop ME nor MY plans! You can't! You won't! And once you and your worthless bitch sister Satsuki went to hell, I'll turn your little Mako into Life Fibers and clothing, and she burn brightly and exquisitely just like your damn Kamui!"

Ryuko hits Ichiro again.

"You're talking too much, bastard!" she yells and coughs blood. Ichiro pulls out Life Fibers out of his hand and attacks the ground with them, launching up smoke and stones that fly into Ryuko's direction. Ryuko is hit and loses posture, and can only defend the incoming attack with effort.

"... alright, Matoi..." he answers passive-aggressively.

...

Satsuki attempts to fend off the Nonon and Houka copy and their attacks, but their skills add up very well. The cubus like holograms Houka throws combine with Nonon's notes.

"The pressure applied to Lady Satsuki will overwhelm her in about one minute and twenty seconds. Results will be shattering." the Houka copy mentions.

"Perfecto, then may I suggest the grand finale,ahaha!?" Nonon laughs happy and creates a large trumpet in the air with her conductor stick. Sanageyama and Satsuki have their one versus one going, although Sanageyama is negatively impressed by Nonon and Houka trying to change the odds to his favour - after all, he wants a fair and square battle. Satsuki does get hit by one of Nonon's notes

and launched into a wall. Debris fall onto her and bury her for a moment.

"Oh wow, Satsuki, if I would have known you feel so restricted by someone standing above you I would have finished this much sooner! After all, I wouldn't want you to suffer..." the copy grins. Additional notes land onto Satsuki and the debris and tear her arm open slightly, with a large bleeding wound scattered across it. It makes it harder for her to hold her weapon. Satsuki seems to lose her temper for a moment and defends herself when Sanageyama attacks her one more time.

"Would y'all shut up and let me take her out, damn it?!" Sanageyama yells angry, while Nonon's pretentiousness rises into the sky the more she chuckles evil.

"... I've had it... with your bullshit." Satsuki answers aggressively.

With the grappling hook, she drags herself to the ceiling. Nonon reacts surprised, Houka tries to change the homing properties. As Satsuki reaches the ceiling, she removes it from it, falls through the air, throws the hook to the walls and kicks Nonon in the air from her drum she's standing on. Nonon falls several meters down to the ground, loses her hat and crouches around, trying to find her conductor stick, while the Houka copy recalculates attacks. Satsuki hits him though while trying, piercing him with her spear and tearing Houka's upper body apart. Due to the damage taken, he dissolves. Ryuko's sister lands back on the ground and tries to take on Nonon, but Sanageyama intervenes and protects her.

"Where are you going, Satsuki!?" he yells angry and performs an overhead attack with his sword, which Satsuki parries, tearing open his face. Sanageyama stays resolve and continues his fight however.

"Good one, Satsuki, good one! But that's not going to stop m..." and he takes another hit by Satsuki on his torso.

"KILL HER ALREADY YOU APE!" Nonon yells as she tries to get to her conductor stick. Though the Sanageyama copy tries to stop Satsuki, he fails ultimately, and Satsuki rams the spear into him. The copy coughs, tries to pull out the spear, but Satsuki forces it in, deeper and deeper, until the copy falls onto the ground and dissolves.

The Nonon copy is panicking, wants to save herself with her stick, but Satsuki walks to it and kicks it away. Then, she looks down to the copy, who's smiling nervous, and moreso afraid.

"Ohhh... oh boy, this didn't went the way I hoped it would, Satsuki. I... uh..."

Satsuki looks sinister, her patience gone.

"Satsuki, you do know that I am your best friend, right? I... I mean we're childhood friends, you wouldn't harm me, would you?"

"..."

"After all... you stand above me... and above everyone." she says and suddenly grabs her conductor stick, aiming at Satsuki. Satsuki quickly dismembers Nonon's arm.

"AAAAARRGGHHH, YOU BITCH! YOU AIN'T GONNA STOP US! WE'LL COME BACK! WE ALL WILL!"

"You won't."

"WHY DO YOU EVEN TRY TO STOP THE INEVITABLE?! Y'ALL ARE GOING TO DIE!"

"..."

"SAY SOMETHING! I BET YOUR STRANGE SISTER ALREADY GOT HER HEAD CUT OFF, GOOD RIDDANCE IF YOU ASK..."

Satsuki kills the Nonon copy by beheading it. She then looks up to the stairs.

"Ryuko." she mumbles worried and runs up the stairs, leaving behind the copies.

...

"Now get over here already!" Mikisugi yells to the remaining allies on the wall, while Nui, Iori, the Mankanshokus and the unconscious Maiko escape from the danger zone. To get to the Nudist Beach units, the allied Life Fibers provide themselves as living shields - without them protecting the humans, the battle would have been over already.

From the ocean, the last remaining Life Fibers attack their hostile comrades. The Couturiers deliver a challenging battle, and since they're being corrupted by Ichiro's source, the conflict turns less and less into Hinata's favour, and more into a suicide mission. Not that it would change much, after all, they will die very soon anyway. Mikisugi watches the Life Fibers that serve as medics slowly dissolve.

"They're losing their energy." the man mumbles worried watching his mates die. The dead Life Fibers hover up into the sky and disappear entirely. Shards break from the source and fusion with the Couturiers, turning them into the tall Life Fiber abominations as seen in the city and the Layer already. And to think these were humans once...

The swarm jumps back into the source, and it delivers the blood drained by the dead Nudist Beach soldiers to heal and strengthen it. Another terrible scream emits from the beam that starts to create a scary, strange face in it, now that a part of it broke apart. A red shock wave leaves the source on the water surface and launches all living beings, be it Couturiers, Life Fibers or humans, that are not behind cover, into the ocean.

Nui attempts to help the wounded soldiers. Since she was Life Fiber herself and well experienced with stitching and tailoring, she's able to heal the wounds as good as possible with a minimum of resources... although it's difficult for her to be fast, after all, she is heavily wounded herself. A Tower Fiber focuses Sanageyama, who's trying to fight off Life Fibers with Gamagoori.

Sanageyama can take cover when the Tower Fiber attacks him, but the destruction it causes hits him anyway and slams him into a wall, bringing in serious wounds on his back. His right leg bleeds, noticeably when his white trousers turn red.

"... ah shit." he mumbles annoyed.

"Get away from here!" Gamagoori orders.

"Never, Ira! We'll kick their... asses together!" he reacts and attempts to stand up.

"Tsumugu!" Mikisugi yells. Tsumugu turns to Mikisugi while he's reloading.

"We gotta get our soldiers to attack one point, if we keep splitting up we'll die!"

"We'll die anyway if we can't find anything to get these bastards to hell..." Tsumugu answers and looks up to the source.

...

"Senketsu!" Ryuko yells to her friend while she blocks off Ichiro's scythe.

"... Ryuko... I can't... see... a thing, I..." he mumbles painful.

"You bastard! I'm gonna kill you for this!" Ryuko screams and kicks Ichiro away from her, just to follow up with several attacks. He can't block off those attacks, his wounds slowly nag on his condition as

well, and cuts his shoulder open. She then launches him into the table.

"I'm so fucking done with you!"

"... yeah... and so am I." he mentions and cuts open Ryuko's legs, causing her to fall onto the ground. She mourns tormented and watches how Ichiro tries to attack her with an overhead attack, which she can block though. His gaze becomes colder and calmer, and the pressure he applies onto Ryuko and the scissor blades becomes heavier and heavier. He looks down, deep into her eyes, trying to make sure this is the last thing she sees when she dies, if she dies, that is. The scissor blades seem to gain little rifts inside. They're breaking.

"Big talk from someone who's about to vanish." he says and starts to cut open Ryuko's cheek slowly with the scythe's tip.

"Come... just give it up, Matoi." he grins evil, hears the door getting kicked open, and then, Satsuki's spear flies directly into his direction. The spear hits him and launches him into the wall, and even his own scythe cuts open some of his arm when he loses it in the air.

"GRAAAARGH!" he screams angry while Satsuki examines her sister. She can barely stand properly.

"Get out of here, Ryuko!"

"No... chance, we'll kick his ass... together..."

"Get. Out. Of. Here!" she orders her sister. Ryuko falls back onto the ground while Satsuki is forced to deal with Ichiro, who attacks her now. Satsuki avoids his attack, grabs her spear and fights him.

The younger sister watches Satsuki fight, and without the fight going on for more than 30 seconds, she already knows, considering Satsuki's condition and wounds, that she wouldn't survive a fight with him alone, despite her being such a strong woman.

Her own wounds make it hard for her to keep up with the Director, even though he himself has taken serious damage too already. She can parry his attacks, but can't make any use out of them - she's not fast enough to bring herself into a position where she could land a guaranteed hit. But both are focused and both try to defeat each other.

Ryuko tries to walk away to regain strength and stamina, but each step is difficult, and every clash of the weapons behind her worries her more and more. Senketsu moans painful due to his destroyed eye, and finally, Ryuko falls to the ground, her right hand bleeding nonstop and unwilling to keep her up. She's far too wounded. She needs help.

So does Satsuki though.

"How admirable that you try to defend your sister. Perhaps I should turn you into clothing and let her live, force her to wear you, oh how beautiful it would be!" the Director yells at Satsuki. Satsuki ignores this, instead, she punches his face when she gets the chance to and rips open his back with her spear. Ichiro slams the scythe into the ground and destroys the ground under Satsuki, making her stumble down. She crawls to her weapon and blocks off an incoming attack from above.

"I can't... let Satsuki get killed." Ryuko mumbles, without much power, knowing though that she has to help her. Her arms are leaned onto the Scissor blades. The scythe deals serious damage to the spear Satsuki wields, and she has to retreat until both her and Ichiro fight around Satsuki's old chair.

Each parry and block drains her stamina, and her wounds burn more and more.

What should Ryuko do in such a situation? She and Satsuki are badly wounded, can't properly fight anymore. They've met their zenith years ago, and even after all these battles the last weeks, they'll never be as strong as they used to be. All that drives Satsuki now is

her resolve to protect her sister at any cost. It gives her the strength she needs. But that strength and resolve is vanishing. Even then - how many wounds can she take? The human body can only suffer so much pain.

The music Nonon plays in the distance is getting more and more quiet in Ryuko's head. The Life Fibers all around them seem to dissolve slowly. Their allies are dying. As long as Ichiro has control over this source, this beam, this battle will not find an end. If anything, his connection has to be severed. One way or another.

Ryuko knows everything and everyone will die if she doesn't take the initiative with Satsuki. A scream from Satsuki wakes her up for a moment, gives her concentration, and she looks back at her sister.

She falls onto the destroyed table, a large splinter tears open her arm, and she starts to bleed. The older sister breathes heavily, avoids another attack from the scythe, but Ichiro doesn't give her a break, he wants her dead. When she tries to stand up, Ichiro grabs her, hits her nose and throws her onto her chair.

"You Kiryuin's are nothing but food to clothing." the psychopath mumbles and slams his weapon against Satsuki's, until it breaks entirely. The spear breaks into two parts, of which the upper part falls behind Ichiro, lighting up in blue slowly. Satsuki looks up at Ichiro, brave, yet grim and dark, she can't get up, but she can take it like a hero. Like the hero she is to her younger sister, that isn't always perfect, but always there for her when she needs her.

However.

Ichiro has never seen Satsuki angry. No one ever has. But Ryuko knows how to - and she knows she will kill Ichiro for that.

"I'm sorry, Satsuki." she breathes in.

With her last energy, Ryuko runs towards Ichiro, opens the scissor blades and runs directly into his weapon, ripping open his entire

upper body. The sounds of scissors cutting through clothing is audible, and briefly after, blood scatters onto Satsuki's face.

For a moment, the world around Satsuki becomes quiet, and everything feels slow, so slow and incomprehensible.

In that moment, Satsuki observes Ichiro's entire body, from his lower torso up to the right shoulder breaks open, bleeding out, and Life Fibers desperately trying to find a hold.

But in that moment she also watches how Ryuko is ripped apart by the scythe, falling onto the ground, with the scissor blades landing near Satsuki.

All she can hear is Ryuko's last breath.

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(AN: Do yourself this favour and listen to "KILL la KILL IF Junketsu Shinzui Valor 3 Theme." on YouTube.)

Nonon's melody sounds so different all of a sudden. So aggressive, full of anger, and the Life Fibers sing in a chorus, noble and impressive. Satsuki immediately moves her vision from Ichiro to Ryuko, while Ichiro screams panicking, yet aggressive, as if a demon is lured out of his hell hole, stumbling near the source, while a light leaves her broken spear.

The scream that emits from the light is followed up by another light, that seems to create a person. Life Fibers leave it, like lightning strikes, and steps can be heard. And finally, a Life Fiber Being leaves it.

It's Junketsu, who stumbles forward, to his mistress, touching her with his own Life Fibers, blurring her vision for a moment, in which

the world, for a short moment, burns, and Life Fibers, both small and tall, crawl across Japan, the ocean - his vision shows what will happen next. What will happen if Satsuki and Junketsu cannot take him out.

She falls from her chair and crawls to Ryuko, while Junketsu attacks Ichiro. Ichiro attempts to get closer to the source, he screams, but Satsuki ignores it. The source strikes into Ichiro's deformed, destroyed body and corrupts him. Junketsu can't take him out. But he can protect his mistress.

Blood leaves Ryuko's body. The big sister briefly touches her sister, but no movement can be felt. With tears in her eyes, Satsuki turns to Ichiro, and with a menacingly gaze no one has ever seen - not even Ragyo could get her this angry.

Out of Ichiro's head, a second one mutates out of it. His torso is held together by deformed hands, and the mutated head has another arm on it. Lighting like Life Fibers leave it.

"I'LL KILL ALL OF YOU! EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU RATS!" he screams. He pushes Junketsu away and walks towards Satsuki. He performs an overhead attack with his bloody scythe to execute Satsuki.

But Satsuki parries the attack with the scissor blades and looks up.

Ichiro summoned his own death, embodied in Satsuki.

"Not... as long as I have breath in my body."

The chorus gets louder, and Satsuki follows up with an brutal attack, in which she cuts open Ichiro's left arm, splitting it into two. He moans angry and is soon after grabbed by Junketsu from behind, who's keeping him under pressure. The psychopath screams as if he is being tortured, his second head moves unnaturally fast, and the arm on it hits Satsuki's face, causing a bleeding wound - but she ignores the hit, just like all the others she took.

Ichiro uses his severed arm to attack Junketsu somehow, but thanks to Junketsu being a distraction, Satsuki can hit a second time and damages his second Life Fiber head. The badly wounded man loses his focus and concentration, attacks carelessly everything around him just to appear dangerous. Satsuki takes a few steps back. Blood drops down her head. Ryuko's and her own.

While watching him, she notices the source is losing strength, the more he loses his mind - Ichiro was right when he said this beam is somehow connected with him. And this makes Satsuki realize that there is no need to kill him, at least not yet. She could easily annihilate him from this world. A simple death wouldn't please her.

If anything, he'll suffer. Just like he made Satsuki suffer.

Every single thought about Ryuko makes Satsuki aggressive. Ichiro slams Junketsu away from him and against the Elite four chairs, causing Junketsu to hiss aggressively. He avoids another attack as he comes closer again, not to seriously hurt Ichiro, but to distract him more. Satsuki uses Junketsu's distraction anew, who however surprises her and hits her torso. Ryuko's sister ignores that wound, and instead, she attacks his legs, from which she rips open one - the source attacks Satsuki and manages to hit her, launching her into the debris.

She stands up focused however. Junketsu keeps Ichiro away from Satsuki, pushes him back, he stumbles and hits Junketsu with the scythe, and when he stands up, he stomps over Ryuko's corpse, pushing her with his leg away, trying to get to Satsuki. She rams the scissor blades into the ground and creates a wave Ichiro cannot avoid. He's hit by it, lands with his back against sharp debris, and his back is pierced slightly.

There is no emotion in Satsuki's face left. Only the cold gaze of a sister that couldn't keep her promise to protect her younger ones. Her eyes are so large, and the pupils so tiny, and the mouth and lips so cold and calm. No need for words.

The Director is irritated by that. How can she be so cold all of a sudden!? She should be crying, but she doesn't! Ichiro stands up again, hits Junketsu, but he boldly takes the damage. Satsuki performs a flurry of attacks which Ichiro barely blocks, though he can find an opening and hits Satsuki with the scythe.

All of these three combattants are merely dead men and women walking, and the only thing that keeps them alive is their willpower. Junketsu, stumbling and torn open, attempts to give cover to Satsuki and take a hit when Ichiro attacks her, but his wounds make him fall himself. Satsuki blocks off an incoming attack. Junketsu stands up again, says something she cannot understand, but Ichiro can.

"SHE'S JUST A HUMAN!"

Ichiro grabs Satsuki's face which he tries to crush with his broken hand, his Life Fiber fingers slimy and hot, but they barely are able to properly hurt her. Satsuki bites into his broken hand, bites off the Life Fibers and spits them away. She cuts open Ichiro's upper torso furthermore, he falls onto his knees, his Life Fiber arm on his head moving around wild.

"YOU CAN'T KILL ME, YOU CAN'T, KIRYUIN! NO ONE CAN!" he screams and laughs, losing his mind over all the wounds he takes due to the scissor blades. He can't comprehend that a human is stronger than him. He can't accept that he's appearing weak and imperfect. He should be perfect. He should be all mighty. He should be the one playing with his toys. And now it's the toys that play with him.

Ichiro mutates more. His body generates more Fiber arms that try to reach for Satsuki, which she however tears apart with the slowly dissolving scissor blades. When Ichiro slams his scythe against her weapon, Satsuki watches how the ultra hardened Life Fibers lose their strength, and the ends of the weapon slowly fall apart. Ichiro continues the pressure onto Satsuki's weapon, until she purposely drops the weapon. Ichiro misses, stumbles forward, Satsuki lands

her hand into Ichiro's empty eye socket, and there, she pulls on the strings inside.

"GET OFF OF ME!"

She pulls out the Life Fibers inside his intact head, throws them onto the ground and stomps them while Ichiro falls onto the ground. Ichiro fidgets around painfully on the ground, hits Satsuki accidentally with the scythe, causing Satsuki to bleed. With her scissor blades, she can cut away the arm that mutated onto his second head. He can't but laugh manically, trying to find a hold, but Junketsu and Satsuki won't stop their pressure.

...

Most Nudist Beach fighters have died. The own Life Fibers are out of energy, and even if they suck up the blood of their dead human friends, they wouldn't be able to take advantage out of it. Hinata, who's watching the battle in the center of the camp Nudist Beach created on the battlefield, can feel his own Life Fibers leaving his body. Mikisugi, Sanageyama and the others can barely fend off the Life Fibers. Gamagoori is being pressured by the larger Life Fibers.

...

Junketsu throws objects after Ichiro that make him fall onto the ground. He loses his scythe for a brief moment and panickly tries to catch it, though Junketsu keeps him busy. The arms on Ichiro's body catch a chair and throw it against Junketsu, making him hiss angry. Satsuki attacks with an overhead attack, which Ichiro avoids, grabbing his scythe and hitting Satsuki's arm. With the dull side, he hits her a second time and makes her slam her head against her own chair. Blood scatters onto it, Satsuki feels dizzy, her vision is blurry, and she can only watch Junketsu fighting Ichiro now.

Next to her is her sister. Her eyes are open, but without movement. The source behind Satsuki lights up irregularly, Life Fibers fall out of it. There is barely any energy left. She stands up again, slowly, but

coughing blood, her heart beating very fast. The scissor blades are breaking apart slowly. They're crumbling.

Ichiro tears apart Junketsu's upper body. Junketsu, who's split into two, doesn't care, he'll keep fighting as good as he can, but Ichiro eventually overwhelms him and attempts to execute him. Junketsu blocks off the attack with his arms and tries to keep the pressure up.

"WHY DO YOU FIGHT FOR THESE PESKY HUMANS!?"

Junketsu looks to Satsuki for a brief moment, and then to Ichiro.

"Mistress... pro... tects... clothing... and... clo... thing... protects... mistress..." Satsuki understands. Ichiro uses all his strength left to sever Junketsu's arm, and then the body itself. A scream leaves Junketsu.

"... free... dom..." can be heard. Even though he killed Junketsu, his remaining Life Fibers crawl up his scythe and then the body, making him stumble. He falls next to Satsuki's chair, and when he stands up, Ichiro watches Satsuki coming closer. He can't block them off properly anymore due to Junketsu and his Life Fibers.

These attacks catch Ichiro off guard, he cannot react, he cannot attack, there is nothing he can do. He can only try to block them off, but eventually, he fails, Satsuki hits him, he takes damage and as he's close to the edge of the top, Satsuki attempts to execute him by slamming the scissor blades onto the staff horizontally, which Ichiro attempts to fend off by keeping the scythe horizontally as well, otherwise he'd be cut.

Ichiro's mutated arms try to stab Satsuki's body, even pierce it, but Satsuki doesn't care, she keeps fighting, keeps the pressure up, and her cold look genuinely shocks Ichiro, scares him even.

Persistently, she keeps pushing with the scissor blades, until the scythe all of a sudden seems to crumble.

"YOU CAN'T DESTROY THE SCYTHER! THIS IS UNFAIR!"

Satsuki pushes harder, Ichiro's intimidated, and slowly but steadily, the scythe breaks, and the scissor blades close more and more.

"NO!"

The weapon breaks.

"NOOOOOOOOOOO!"

The scissor blades destroy the scythe, it dissolves immediately, and Satsuki cuts Ichiro into two halves. His hands fall off of him. Blood leaves his body.

Satsuki looks into Ichiro's face, covered by blood, heavily wounded herself. He's confused. How could this happen? The beam loses strength behind him. In an angle of his eye, he can see the light of the source disappearing. Everything falls apart. And so does he.

"Fear... is... freedom.

Subjugation... is... liberation.

Contradiction... is... truth."

Satsuki tears up.

"Those... are the truths of this world."

She bites her teeth together.

"... everyone has to succumb to them. No matter... the material one is made of... because in the end... everyone deserves to live."

Blood leaves Ichiro's mouth.

"... go to hell."

Satsuki cuts Ichiro into two and pulls the scissor blades out. His torso slowly falls off of his legs and thighs.

Eventually, his body rips apart, and the source dissolves entirely. The sky lights up in red for a brief moment, turns white, and eventually, takes on the darkness of the night - dying Life Fibers fall from it, as well as the snow.

Ichiro falls from the top of the tower. His legs fall onto the ground, and then dissolve.

Satsuki too falls onto the ground, her energy depleted, her resolve gone, now that it is not needed anymore.

The Couturiers dissolve as well when the source disappears. The tall Life Fiber monstrosities break apart, fill the ocean with dead Life Fibers which soon will dive down to the deepest parts of it, until they will be nothing but little cells.

Nui and Mako look out of their cover. Nui watches her brothers and sisters dissolve. Both the good and the bad ones. And on top of the tower, something dissolves too. She, as well as the others, make their way to it.

...

The scissor blades dissolve in Satsuki's hands. From the top down to the grip, everything falls apart. The young woman rolls to the side and crawls, while leaving a bloody path, to her sister, who she turns around.

She and Senketsu just lay there, cold and calm now. She puts her hand onto Ryuko's cheek, on Senketsu's destroyed eye, and lastly, on her heart area - which isn't pumping anymore.

The big sister doesn't even try to wake Ryuko up. She knows it won't work. It won't make her feel any different.

All she can do now is sit in front of Ryuko and look at her, like a pet that mourns for its dead owner. Tears leave her eyes, and where fury and anger was before, there is only loneliness now - and the undefeatable feeling of having failed entirely. It's a big sister's task to protect her younger siblings... but what kind of sister is Satsuki when she can't manage to protect them?

Ichiro killed Ryuko and Senketsu.

Nothing matters anymore. In the end, Ichiro won. He broke Satsuki.

She's kneeling in front of her dead sister, and there is nothing she can do anymore. Her shoulders sink down as she realizes this more and more.

"... I'm sorry, Ryuko." she mumbles guilty and breathes in and out slowly, but heavily.

Mikisugi and Sanageyama arrive, seeing the lonely Satsuki in front of Ryuko. Both men approach her slowly and then notice the corpse. Mikisugi slams his fist against the wall. Sanageyama sighs disappointed. More and more friends arrive. Nonon, Tsumugu, Gamagoori.

Then, Mako and her family joins. They sneak past Gamagoori and the others. Satsuki closed her eyes. She's just sitting there. Scattered with wounds and blood, and tears in her face. And when Mako sees Ryuko, she shakes her desperately, tries to wake her up, almost kisses her in the hope she would stand up, but Satsuki already muted these sounds in her head. She can only hear her own pulse now. Quiet and slowly. Gamagoori comforts her when she leans her head against his knee.

But who's hit the hardest is probably the little sister.

"Let... me through!" Nui orders aggressively, worried as to why everyone just stands there. Satsuki hears this well. She pushes

everyone away and arrives at Ryuko's corpse, and Satsuki, who's next to her.

Satsuki looks up to her little sister. Nui looks so cold hearted.

All that is left is an expressionless, but inside, destroyed gaze. Nui looks at Ryuko's face for a brief moment. And then to Satsuki.

Both look into each other's eyes.

Then, Nui forms a fist and looks down to the abyss, where she can see Ichiro in the ruins. She nods to Satsuki cold hearted and leaves the tower.

Hinata and his remaining Life Fibers appear and mix between the Nudist Beach fighters, of who a bunch of them walk away broken. No one wants to celebrate. This night cost too many lives, on both sides. Even though the Life Fibers have been defeated entirely.

Hinata looks down at Ryuko.

"... home... at last..." he mumbles quiet. His body slowly dissolves. His underlings watch him and then Ryuko - they sing a melody and come closer to her. But Nui, as she disappears from the tower, misses the end of the melody.

...

Ichiro lays in the middle of the ruins. He can't crawl away anymore. He coughs painful, is shocked by his failure and cannot realize his defeat. The corruption on his body is gone. What is left of him is the destroyed torso, caused by Satsuki and Ryuko. Only his head is still properly intact. Next to him is the ocean and the destruction of the Academy. There is a red light that shines on top of the tower.

Hinata and his humanoids have dissolved. In the distance, the Tower Fiber of Nudist Beach dissolves, the REVOCS tank on the wall breaks apart as well. Just like all the Life Fibers in the world do.

Stones and debris break near him. Smoke rises up, Ichiro turns his head to it... and then he finally sees the silhouette of his Doppelgänger, who's approaching him slowly, stumbling a bit, with a cold gaze, calm but piercing.

He shakes his head in disbelief.

"... that cannot be..."

"..."

"... you must be dead, you... you must... I, I saw it..." he mumbles scared as he sees Nui approaching him.

"... how is that possible?... this is so unfair... you... why can you live... and I have to die?"

Nui comes closer, stumbles, almost falls, but can stand up again and reaches him.

"... is... what... are you... this isn't right, you... what did you do... to... come back... !?"

She kneels down and turns her arm around. Flesh is visible.

"... oh no no no no no..."

She grabs Ichiro's neck slowly and cuts wounds with her finger nails. Blood leaves the skin. He, who is already dying, now rings for breathe, or anything he could use to at least take her with her into hell. After all, she is human now. No Life Fiber.

And when he properly realizes and comprehends this fact, he gives up. She chokes him, looks deep into the eye that is left.

"... defeated... by... a human..." he mumbles.

Nui chokes more...

"... well... played..."

... and breaks his neck. His head turns to the side. Only then, as nothing moves anymore, a minute later, she leaves his body and stands up. The dead Ichiro slowly falls to the side.

And into the ocean, where his body eventually dissolves entirely.

As all the Life Fibers dissolve.

Silence.

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AN: See you soon in Chapter 30 "Across Japan, With Calm Hearts".

Across Japan, With Calm Hearts

AN: Welcome to the final chapter of this story. It's been a very long journey and the longest story I've ever wrote. I'm glad it's over now. There's still another story I want to write. And there are a LOT of things I'd like to talk about, but that will be done in a following chapter, so if you are interested in a behind the scenes, keep this story subscribed. Some things may be interesting for you. For now, enjoy this last chapter of my sequel story to KKK. Thanks to everyone who travelled this journey with me and with Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui. :) We'll see us again. Either in the next chapter, or in another KKK story which will likely come out soon. :) Have fun reading now, and let this journey end.

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Peace has found it's way into the dark halls. The indescribable distances reveal the white memory fibers, far away, until they are nothing but little, little strings. Somewhere in the sky of these halls, they end, but where, and how, is something no one will find out.

The melodies have gotten quiet, though not silent. Now that they've all dissolved and lost their connection to the physical world, there is not much left for them. Nothing but the darkness.

Though, when you listen closely, steps can be heard, slow and cold. Echoes that hall through this realm. But there is no answer.

Only cold steps.

Ragyo's steps.

Her younger self wanders through the halls she ruled over, and every once in a while, she can watch a few memory fibers appear. Sometimes, a group of red life fibers hover around.

The melodies are calm. They don't hail the Entity anymore, who is but a simple lower life fiber itself now.

The mother wears her old clothes, the ones she wore during Izumi's time. Noble and elegant. Her arm is the same as well - she looks like a normal human who's wandering under beings that are not like her. But she wanted to be like that.

Ragyo kneels down, defeated by her own ambitions, defeated by her own children, her own tools. But it's not hatred that fills her heart. What fills her now is solitude. She was afraid of death, and now, death got it's grip on her. She may not be forgotten, but surely not the way she would have wished it to be. She never wanted this. She just wanted to make this world a better place. As so many people like her would want to. But the life fibers took her body, her fears, and eventually, her mind, to create a copy that works in her name. And when she got into danger herself, the life fibers found out how fragile their leader was, and so, they turned away, and relied on whatever was left.

Tears fall onto the ground. The dead life fibers on it suck them up like sponges. Her hands fall onto the ground, slow and weak.

Damned to stay in these halls until the end of time.

This thought alone is destructive. It's a horror she can't comprehend. What is left for her to do, except for waiting for an event that will likely never happen, as time will not stop. She cannot eat. Cannot drink. Cannot even sleep. All she can do is wander around. Like everyone else. Life is a journey - and the decisions of her journey brought her into the emptiness.

What an irony.

"... I'm sorry..." she mumbles, having tears in her eyes, knowing her words will not change anything.

Perhaps an ultimate end would be more preferable. At least she then could escape this fate. Ragyo cannot stop tearing up.

The white fibers stay. They remember everything. They remember her too. Through them, Ragyo can see what her life was like. What could possibly happen today. The possibilities are endless. Like stars in space that look down on humanity.

In one of these fibers, she can see her brother.

In another one, she can see Satsuki, sitting on a chair made out of Life Fibers, her head lowered, and her old sword Bakuzan rammed into the ground, with blood flowing it down slowly.

The memory fiber in the far distance displays Nui, watching Ragyo apathic, the eyes dead and the body stance embodying judgement.

Even the primordial life fiber is visible. It sings Ragyo's name quietly, it wants her to embrace it's apparent warm feelings. But Ragyo knows better now. Knows that this is just a lie. And yet, it will always watch her.

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Steps can be heard. They get louder and louder. Life fibers hiss carefully. Ragyo doesn't turn around - there is no need to. No need to do anything anymore.

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There is something standing next to Ragyo. A Life Fiber Being. It's arms are shredded, the eyes orange and empty. It's body having a female appearance, and spiky hair.

Ragyo looks up to it, into it's face. Her tears weigh heavily, and inside the empty eyes, when taking a closer look, she seems to see Ryuko, mirrored in them. As the Life Fiber Being she always was.

The mother looks down again, sighing in subtle agony.

But briefly after, the Being sits down to Ragyo, calm and peaceful, not making any noises or saying anything. It just sits next to her. And then looks towards the halls. Sometimes, a few life fibers fall from it, but new ones grow fast enough. Ragyo looks towards into the emptiness again.

They both do, and her creations's body stance is comfortable and calm. She mourns.

The being starts humming a subtle and calm melody. Melancholic but soothing.

Minutes later, another thing appears, coming from her left, and she does not dare to look up. She can see the clothes. A white coat. And an atmosphere she has not experienced ever since... ever since he disappeared.

"... hey." Soichiro says calm. Ragyo cannot stop tearing up. Though his presence gives comfort, and Ragyo leans her head onto his shoulder. Their child on their right looks to them, watching Soichiro smile very slightly and wistful. It's shredded, destroyed face attempts to create a smile itself, and finally, looks back forward.

Forward, into the eternal darkness.

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Two years later.

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There is a dark sky conquering all of Japan and its surroundings. It's evening, and a storm is howling outside. A thunder rings out, and briefly after, a lightning is visible in the clouds, all while the strong rain destroys the ground, scattering upon the stone paths of the Matoi mansion, in which only one person is residing now.

In the background, one can hear a TV, broadcasting the news.

When a lightning strikes the ground in the far distance, Nui can be seen, mirrored by the window.

There is only a cold face left. Lone apathy moving through each of her cells. The Matoi Mansion looks just like always, like back when

the journey started. Clean, a warm temperature.

Ryuko's room is as always.

Everything is as always. Except Ryuko is missing.

"... and the closure of the REVOCS corporation has been announced today. CEO and spokeswoman of the company, Satsuki Kiryuin, said as followed:"

Scene switch to the main plaza of the REVOCS headquarter in Nagoya. The city is ravaged, skyscrapers broken, and what once belonged to REVOCS is now gone. Gone and destroyed. Private companies rule this city now. Here, it is raining as well, if not as bad as in Chiba. Satsuki insisted on holding her last speech as CEO today, and this has a price: behind her, you can see workers removing everything that is related to REVOCS, and the furniture is brought out. This is the last day with REVOCS having it's gates open.

Satsuki throws her gaze hesitiously towards the few citizens and journalists that dared to cross these streets today, all to watch, and to record. The young woman wears a grey to white coat, perhaps for symbolic reasons.

"... this corporation... exists for a long time. My ancestors and I would look back at several centuries, no, millenias of REVOCS - of a company devoted to what was known as life fibers." she says calm and yet nervous.

"To know that I stand at the end of it's journey, watching the pillars of what once held this reign of terror together break apart... I would declare myself happy, if it wouldn't be for the costs I had to take. I've sworn to protect.

Protect both my sisters... of which both are life fibers."

The people stay calm. Everyone knows hybrids exists now.

"There may be more of them. More, of which I do not know. Hybrids developed by REVOCS, or other intelligent minds...

...

There was a time where I had a genuine disdain for these life fibers. I wanted them to die. I wanted them to be obliterated. I wanted them to disappear forever. No one would believe me today if I would say that these... parasites... that lived on our bodies and heads were more than what we used to know about them. Not just clothing.

Both of my sisters were more than what I saw. Perhaps made with cloths, but inside, there was a heart. More... or less.

One of them is dead. Gave her life to save mine.

The other one speaks no longer. She talks. But the words spoken out of her mouth are cold, lost.

And I cannot help.

...

Isn't it ironic that it's due to the life fibers that we are still alive?

Maybe we should learn to not point our fingers at something that is collectively known as evil if we do not know everything about it. There is more behind what you see. The grim man at the house next to you has a past. The disdainful CEO you work for has his reasons to be like this - whether they are justified or not. Rarely we are wrong on that, and there is nothing but pure evilness left.

If there is one thing I've learned out of all the battles I've fought, then that I was wrong.

Today, the last packages of the cure has been produced and distributed. I do not have any nightmares after I've received it.

Except for one.

In this nightmare, I have been killed by this "Director". My body - split into two. My organs - dissolved in front of me. And all I could do was watch my heart pumping in fear. My blood left my body.

Though...

... though my sister would have lived.

I wish every night that it would have happened this way." Satsuki tears up.

"...

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... fuck, I can't do this anymore." she mumbles and leaves the podest.

...

Nui watched the broadcast in an angle of her eye. Another thunder rings out. Nui slowly approaches the TV. Her hair is the same as always, but more clean now - short twin drills. The clothes she wears are hand made, of course. A purple scarf, a shirt in dark blue and a dark red skirt going to her kneecaps. And gloves, skin tight.

There are puppets on the desk. One of Ryuko, one of Satsuki, and one of Nui. She looks at them.

"... hey Ryuko, would you like to play a game?!" Nui asks the Ryuko puppet. She grabs said Ryuko puppet and speaks in a lower voice.

"But of course, Nui, you are the best little sister of all time!" she continues and looks at Satsuki.

"Mind if I join?" Satsuki asks curiously.

Soon, she understands however that all of this is a simple imagination. Nui grabs Ryuko and examines the little puppet. Carefully, she picks Ryuko's arms and drags them off. And puts them back onto her. And pulls them off. And back.

It wouldn't be too far off if someone would say that she lost her mind a bit. She is still sane, but there is a subtle gaze in his eyes that tells a viewer "I am not okay". Instead, it shows that Ragyo's revelation has left a mark on her. Sure is that Nui doesn't have much trust left, for anyone. Satsuki hasn't done much after Ryuko died. All she did was mourn for her. Day by day, night by night. And, while understandable, it seems as if Nui dislikes that - it drags Satsuki's attention away from her, and an instable person such as Nui needs someone to trust and drain attention from, and on the other hand, Satsuki loses her perception towards life. It's only about Ryuko now. Or at least what should have been.

"Hrmpf." she grumbles and puts the puppets away, then leaves the room, entering the hallway and looking down the stairs to the basement.

...

More days pass. Satsuki lives alone in a small mansion in the prefecture of Ishikawa, close to the beaches - her house is on a small cliff, on which the water clashes. Her house appears modern, with white walls and a flat roof. There is a window wall giving her a good look at the ocean, being stormy and dark the last days. Such as everything.

Satsuki stands there, in a white suit with blue stripes, watching the ocean while drinking a tea. Her body stance isn't as willful and resolve as it used to be, she became more calm. Attentive - but not willing to fight more. What's there to fight? What's left anyway? REVOCS is gone. Ryuko is dead. Ragyo is dead. Her friends lead their own lives.

She has enough money to spend for the rest of her life, that is granted to her as the heir of REVOCS - and now what? Her life was focused on taking out Ragyo, REVOCS and everything connected to it. And now something is missing.

The alarm rings out. It's 5:30 AM. She couldn't sleep. After turning off the alarm, she finishes her cup of tea and walks into the minimalistic kitchen. At the end of the small hallway, she grabs a thick and warm jacket in grey color and enters the rainy nature, opening her car and leaving her little estate.

Next step: Chiba.

...

While driving on the highway, she visits several smaller and bigger cities. Humans are everywhere. It's surreal to drive through them, now that REVOCS has been closed. Free of life fibers and free of Nudist Beach which has disappeared ever since the Director is gone.

Feels like she is in a world that doesn't need her anymore. It makes it difficult for Satsuki to find a hold - hence she's mostly at home nowadays.

Though, at least the feeling of having something accomplished remains. At least she's off the radar after everything about the life fibers has been revealed. The public opinion didn't like it, but it'll change over time. While driving through Tokyo, she notices the old REVOCS complex. The ruins have been removed, what is left of it is a large, empty foundation, and a banner of REVOCS on top of it, acting as a symbol. Below it, a sign with the sentence: "May the life fibers never return." Satsuki tries to ignore it. REVOCS is gone. Nothing but a shadow of her past.

...

Knock knock.

Nui leaves the basement, closes and locks the door and opens the entry door, seeing Satsuki.

"... hey."

Nui watches her apathic.

"May I come in?"

Satsuki's sister musters her and hugs her briefly, though her face expression remains the same. She and Satsuki enter the hallway and after Satsuki putting her jacket away, both of them walk into the living room. It's comfortable here, and Satsuki sits down on a soft warm couch with a red blanket on it. Nui goes into the open kitchen and prepares a glass of water for Satsuki, then looks to her.

"How are you doing?" Satsuki asks.

She simply shrugs.

"Thought so." Satsuki answers. It's probably uncomfortable to see this from someone who doesn't want to talk much anyway, but Satsuki knows well that Nui is happy about having her around. Just the one thing she can't really feel like doing is actively expressing it. When everything breaks apart around you and your family has done evil deeds towards you, whether they were justified or not, you see the world different.

"How's... how's your therapy going?" she asks curious. Nui breathes in and out.

"I've been there three weeks ago." she answers calm and sits down, giving Satsuki a glass of water.

"I see. Is it going well?"

"Been told the perception in my head is irreparable."

"That means... you cannot be helped?"

"No."

"Have you told them you... have a condition? That you have psychopathic tendencies?"

"Yes."

"What did they say?"

"They were afraid. It's better that way."

"... I'm sorry."

"Don't think about it. Not like you can change it anymore." she says. They both watch the chimney. It's fall after all, and it has gotten cold.

"I have to think about what I want to do next. I don't know where to apply - people read my name and I am rejected by default." Satsuki mentions.

"Open a store."

"Honestly... I've thought about that already. I have the financial means. But I don't know what and I can't do it alone. I never learned any special professions."

"Open a clothing store."

"... maybe."

"I'll be your tailor."

"Do you feel alright with that?"

"Better to force people actual taste upon their bodies than to sit around and do nothing."

"I suppose that's true. At least we both have an understanding of what looks good."

"Right."

"..."

"..."

"But it has to be specially tailored clothes. We shouldn't be any ordinary store."

"Good enough for me."

"Nonon prepares a concert this evening. Would you like to join me? I'd have to visit Nagoya first however."

"... what do you want in Nagoya?" she asks skeptical.

"Just have to visit the manor. I want to visit the grave, like last year."

"You know I hate this place."

"Yes, I am aware. You don't have to join me though."

Nui considers the offer. She looks down... and briefly after puts on her gloves.

"... which car do we take?" she asks Satsuki.

"We'll take my car."

Satsuki's sister nods and stands up, grabbing an umbrella in the hallway and a coat with two colors - after turning off all lights, they leave the mansion and enter the car to visit their old home.

...

A few hours later...

...

Satsuki and Nui drive through the forests of Nagoya. The street they are driving on is in a bad state, and nature has conquered the area. At the cliffs constructed by the primordial life fiber when it escaped, trees hang there, broken parts of the estate, and water fills up little holes and margins in the dirt. Apart from the street, everything has gotten muddy.

It has been very stormy in the past. The entire place spreads an unnerving, lonely atmosphere. No one was here for years. Except for Satsuki and Nui, who seem to visit this place for years - always at the same time, and always the same, with Nui always asking why Satsuki wants to go there... and always with the same response. Like a loop both are aware of.

And despite this place that used to be fuelled by hate and evilness, nature still has come back, and accepted what happened here. The old lair in which the primordial life fiber resided slowly lives up in dark green colors, and ponds with water wherever you look. This might be a nice place, sometime in the future, on a day with a brighter weather.

In the distance is the old garden. A single tree is left there, with a grave next to it. Satsuki parks the car on the street, a few minutes away from said grave. Nui leaves the car as well, opening an umbrella and following Satsuki till they reach a few ruins which Nui stops at.

Satsuki wanders the path to the grave, being reminded of old memories - the childhood she didn't had, and the teenage years she spent preparing war. And the closer Satsuki comes to the grave and the stone dedicated to it, the tighter Nui holds the umbrella. As if the feeling of protection conquers her one more time, telling her "You will not hurt her, not even you are dead."

In these memories of Satsuki's, mother Ragyo is dominant. But she isn't there anymore. Not in her head to chase her down. Ragyo is dead, like Ryuko, and like father Soichiro. Maybe they've all met up in the dark halls.

Satsuki reaches the grave she dugged up, looking down on it. There is a name on the gravestone. Ragyo's name.

"I wonder what you are thinking of me now." she says to the grave.

"The work of our family is done. What we did was done without will, without compliance. We did it as slaves. And you were corrupted by them.

I always wanted your death.

Now it has come. And I feel empty. I feel without a sense for this world, but with a sense for the discord and violence that is left here, in which only the strong rules, and the weak ones being destroyed. But perhaps you were wrong. Perhaps so many are wrong. Perhaps this world is supposed to be cruel and evil.

That's not your fault.

Is Ryuko with you?

...

I wish I could know if she forgave you. I do truly.

Well. Maybe it's not that important anyway. You wouldn't deserve it.

And yet, I did it anyway. I couldn't bear this burden any longer. And it felt... liberating. As if fighting you has showed me only that even after your supposed death, you would always hold your grip around my neck.

Mother, I am afraid of relationships. I am afraid of the challenges this world has to offer.

That is all your fault.

But you know what?

Despite all that fear, there are humans I love, and that love me. I live for those. You kneeled down before the future. If I would have had the chance, I would have changed it. I would have tried to make sure we are all a family. You, father, Ryuko, Nui and me.

It's just another wish."

A thunder rings out.

"My life will not be destroyed by the past - and yet, I fear and mourn for what I've lost. It's why I come back every year at this time, standing at this very spot.

... I think I would be a different person if I wouldn't have forgiven you. Maybe I would be just as disdainful as you were, using this cure for her own means.

I do not love you, mother.

But I wouldn't hate you either.

In the end, you gave me two little siblings to care for."

The wind howls slightly and the trees creak.

"I would stay longer. But you know what Nui thinks of you.

Please... if these dark halls have a gate left, and if you can hear my words... tell Ryuko and father we are alright.

We'll meet again. In the end, we always do, don't we?

Please take care of yourself... mom."

Satsuki breathes in and out subtly with her nose. Water stains her clothes. The woman turns around to Nui, who's looking into Satsuki's face, examining her movement with the eyes, not moving her head at all however.

"We can leave now." Satsuki tells Nui. She stands on the spot, while Satsuki enters the car and prepares the route to Tokyo. Nui stands outside in the rain, lifeless and cold.

What might go through her head now? How would this feel? Standing out there in the cold open, in the ruins where your life has been stolen, replaced with one enforced with fear and insanity.

No one can say what she is thinking. The only certainty is that whatever she is thinking, it's evil. And maybe justified. Her lips move subtly, speaking a language a human cannot comprehend. It's but two syllables spoken, in a cold, dark way.

She turns around and enters the car, closing the umbrella and looking forward, and soon after, Satsuki hold her hand onto Nui's shoulder, who's then looking to her.

"Thanks for coming with me, as you always do."

"... don't mention it."

"So... how about we drive to Tokyo now? Highway might be full so we'll have to take another route, but we'll get there anyway in time."

"Satsuki."

"Yes?"

The rain slams onto the car.

"Have you ever made a grave for me?" she asks, directly referencing to when she died her first time. An uncomfortable question, and maybe one that shouldn't be asked. But then again - she'll say it anyway.

"... no."

"I know. Would you have done one?"

"I... would have not. Not until now. Not until I know you better."

Nui nods slowly.

"But you know that I care for you, do you?"

"... I guess so. At least you are honest to me." Nui answers grateful.

"You'd notice a lie if one would be said. I don't want to hurt you. Even though I did."

"You didn't."

"No?"

"Satsuki?"

"... yes?"

"Why me?"

Satsuki doesn't know how to answer this question.

"I don't want to be insane."

"..."

"I feel lost."

"... you know... so do I."

"You do?"

"Mhm. What else is there left to do? I know I cannot make up for how I treated you. If I am being honest, I wouldn't make up for everything either. I know you wouldn't, too. I wouldn't be surprised if you'd straight up say you hate me."

"I don't."

"I know. I know that there are things you cannot forget. I can't either. There are things you wouldn't forgive Ryuko either, would you? That... arms... thing."

Nui nods slowly.

"All of that hurts. But you see... I forgave mother so that I can learn to accept the things she did. And I know you forgave both Ryuko and me as sisters. Not everything we three did has to be forgiven towards each other. That would be hypocritical. You wouldn't regret turning Ryuko into a life fiber monster when you first met her, wouldn't you?"

"I wouldn't."

"Yeah. You don't have to though. I guess what I am trying to say is... some things don't need to be forgiven, but the person itself can be loved still. What counts is the "now", not the "back then". To answer your question:

I wouldn't have made you a grave back then, because I hated you.

If you'd die today though, I would go with you. I couldn't bear losing my other sister.

I love you... and that is the truth."

Nui nods. And then hugs Satsuki.

"... I love you too, Satsuki."

Satsuki smiles hearing that and leaves off of her after a moment.

"We should go now." she says. Nui nods.

"Alright." the younger sister answers. Though it was uncomfortable to have this conversation, it's good they had it anyway.

...

As they drive through the inner city of Tokyo, rough neon lights lighten up the rainy evening, and cars enlighten the paths. Tokyo hasn't changed. It's just as lively as it used to be. Both park the car a street away from the theatre due to all the traffic over there, and walk the last steps on foot.

Inside the warm building, they can go through the backdoor behind the reception desk and from there on in a room for the staff - there, they leave their coats and go on. The theatre here is beautiful, with expensive, warm and good looking colours, decent lighting and impressing architecture. There must have been a lot of money put into this building.

Both sisters walk up the stairs and open the room where Nonon and her musicians prepare their concert. When Nonon turns around, she smiles satisfied and greets them, while Houka sits in the background, working on a new Laptop. They both haven't changed too much, though Nonon walks slower and more careful, and when Satsuki takes a closer look at her, she can see the scar near her neck, caused by Ichiro.

She hugs Satsuki and shakes Nui's hand.

"Hey, nice to see both of you. I'm surprised to see you here, thought you guys are out of this musical thingy."

"Good to see you as well, Nonon. Well, we've wanted to get on other thoughts and figured we could attend your concert. It's been a while anyway, no?" Satsuki answers, Nui stays quiet.

"Mhm!"

"And how are you doing, Houka?"

Houka looks up and clears his throat.

"Well, I've given Miss Jakuzures' music a chance and was not disappointed, in opposition of my expectations. Now I am here every

month and watch the concerts from the VIP lounge.

In other words, I am doing fine."

Satsuki nods satisfied. Nui walks through the room and through a door to a large hallway that goes downstairs, seemingly leading to the podest. Walking these stairs down, she takes a gaze through the curtain, seeing people everywhere - including Sanageyama sitting with a man and woman that are about 20 years older than him.

That's probably his parents. It seems as if he listened to Gamagoori's advice back in the days. Speaking of which, Gamagoori is present as well, though he's in the last row - the reason for that is probably clear.

Nui walks up the stairs again and notices Satsuki and Nonon are still talking.

"Well at least you could finance your own theatre. Your father would be proud."

"It's your fault I came this far though, I needed a credit. I'll pay that back sometime."

"No need to. It's not like I'm desperate for money."

"Right. Yeah well, I guess father would be proud, but all this Kiryuin crap has cost him his life. At least I know I can rely on you and the others - and it's nice to have a stable foot in life, you know?"

"Yes."

Nui walks pass Nonon and Satsuki.

"How's it going with you, Nui?" Nonon asks curious. Nui looks back with an apathic gaze.

"Oh... my bad. You don't like to talk much anymore. Apologies." Nonon mumbles.

"She's... just very conflicted. Hence she doesn't speak much. But she's doing fine."

"I see. I hope you'll do better soon. Oh yes, are you guys down to eat later? I'll gladly invite you to the restaurant near here."

Nui looks at Satsuki, being not very fond of the idea.

"Thanks for the invitation, but I think Nui and me will go back home after the concert. Another time."

"Alrighty, I gotcha. You guys should go to the VIP lounge now, and quick, my boys and girls are ready now." she chuckles excited and pats Satsuki's shoulder, then leaves the room with the musicians. Both sisters leave the room and enter the VIP lounge, where Satsuki then notices the other friends too.

At least they are doing well.

...

Snow falls. Days after Neo-REVOCS' destruction, most Nudist Beach members made their way home, if something is left of it, that is. Of the Elite Four, only Sanageyama is left. He watches how the dead are being brought away, and how the armory of the organisation is sealed away in chests, so that they never have to be used again.

Satsuki in the meantime sits lonely at the beach, watching the ocean and the destroyed Academy. Her hands are sunken into the sand that is soaked up with water. Sanageyama knows why. Briefly after, he sees Nui coming closer, carrying the dead Ryuko on her arms and bringing her to a car. He walks to Nui.

The youngest sister puts Ryuko onto a soft blanket and into an embryonal stance, then covering Ryuko entirely with her dead friend Senketsu.

"... *sigh*... wish we could have avoided this." he mumbles. Nui doesn't react.

"Where are you going with her?" he asks. Nui closes the trunk and looks into his direction.

"What do you think?" she asks, being provoked by the question.

"To her dad?"

"Yes."

"At least she's reunited with him then."

"Right."

"... sorry. Didn't mean to come off as invading." he mentions. Nui looks into his eyes for a moment.

"I had so much on my mind when it comes down to my sisters - I feel like all of my "family" members hate me, and even if they tell me otherwise, I cannot get rid of the feeling they don't. I know not a single person who hasn't done any harm to me, and still I like them. Ryuko's dead and she owes my old arms, and yes, I am aware that she got what she deserved for that!

I think I'd laugh if it would happen again! I think I would also cry soon after cause she's still my sis. I don't understand the world anymore! Why can my mom live but I have to die for her?!"

"Hey, maybe you should talk with..."

"With who? Satsuki? Doesn't know what it's like to be me. No one does. No matter what I do, it always fails, whether I want to kill everyone or protect the one person that inflicted pain on me, and I would still love her.

I don't trust anyone. Why would I tell anyone what I am doing? Why the question in the first place? What do you think where a sister

would go with her dead sibling? To a restaurant?"

"I'm sorry, okay?"

"... yeah." she answers and opens the car door.

"You all should be." Nui continues, enters and closes the car door again. Then she drives away.

The man visits Satsuki at the beach shortly after.

"... what do I do now, Sanageyama?"

"Live on. That's what she'd want the most now."

"How should I live on with the ill conscience that I can't protect my sisters?"

"Then she would have died for nothing. She didn't took the hit for the world, I bet she wouldn't give a shit about most people. She took that hit for you cause she didn't want you to die. If you give up yourself now just like your other sister, then this Director has won. Hell, he won enough already with Ryuko."

"..."

"You ain't gonna change it anymore, but you don't have to."

"Don't think just of Ryuko. Think of the others, think of Mikisugi, Tsumugu, Ira, Nonon, Houka, think of me, and think especially of your psycho sister that looks up on you even though she acts as if you are her greatest enemy. Man, now's the best chance to make it better. Ryuko's dead and nothing will change this anymore, but I've heard of your history in your family - at least show your other sister you're being there for her and that she can actually trust you. Otherwise you'll end up alone like we all did at one point."

You told me yesterday what your mother's plans were. She wanted to change the world to the better, right?"

"..."

"Then do that. Show that world that the Kiryuin's aint just heartless assholes, you have the chance now."

"... and what do I do after?"

"Live. Accept it happened. Only then you'll be able to live for yourself. Talk with your friends about this. And if you are truly down, you can count on the others, or your sister. If I learned one thing out of all the shit the last weeks, then that no matter how crappy everything gets, we'll get through it anyway."

"And you? What will you do?"

"Me?"

"Yes."

"I guess I'll go to my parents. I've sent them a message days before, they said they would meet me in Tokyo. Guess that's a rendezvous point you won't forget."

"Why did you stay here at all anyway?"

"Cause the others had their reasons to leave, and I know you and Nui aren't buddies. But you guys should be, damn it, you should be sisters. Ragyo's gone and so are the life fibers, you obviously cannot make up for the past but at least you can make something good out of the present time. Besides, we both are friends.

... well, and I wanted to duel with Ryuko. Guess I can forget that now."

Satsuki leans her head to the ground.

"Anyway... I suppose no one knows what the future will have for us in mind. All I know is that it's gonna be difficult, especially if you all of a sudden give yourself up too. So please, do me that favour, and

don't do any bullshit. Kick the world's ass like Ryuko always wanted, clean your family name and use the time you have now to heal. You've still got friends to laugh with, things to enjoy, and a sister to care for. We all will be grateful.

You'll do well, Lady Satsuki."

"Alright. But... how should I start?"

"Get that cure done. And try to get closer to Nui. You guys gonna need each other these days."

A taxi appears.

"Ah well... guess there's my exit."

Satsuki looks back to Sanageyama.

"If you need me, you can count on me, you know that. See you soon, Sats." he says. Satsuki stands up and catches him.

"Wait." she pleads.

"Hm?"

Satsuki hugs Sanageyama. He pats her shoulder and sighs.

"I bet Ryuko's glad you're alive and well. Don't make her angry now, alright? Heal yourself and what is left of your family. You can do that."

"I'll try."

"Nah, you will do it. There ain't no trying. When we had our duels, all I thought was trying to defeat you. "I'll try to defeat you, and this time for real," you know?

But trying isn't doing. You'll do good, you always do." he says and leaves Satsuki behind until he disappears in the groups of people.

A wave reaches the beach, soaking Satsuki's boots.

"..."

She nods, biting her teeth while her lips are closed.

...

Satsuki sits at a window in the Matoi mansion, with Nui on a couch, watching Satsuki. Both wear their pyjamas already, and it's late. Packages of ordered food are on the table, and a few drinks as well as some movies.

"So... Nui?"

"..."

"About that store you spoke of... would you really want to do this?"

"Why not?"

"I thought we should leave this clothing thing beyond us."

"We'd have to take off all our clothes then and live like these Nudist Beach fools."

"I mean... producing clothes and all. I don't want to drill you into doing more."

"I love doing it. That doesn't have anything to do with Ragyo."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure am."

"Well, that's good then. I've seen those puppets you made of us. They're cute."

"Thanks."

"Could you maybe make them for me as well?"

"Yes. They'll be done tomorrow."

"Great." Satsuki answers genuine. Moments after, silence conquers the room.

That's how it's always is when it comes to those two alone. There's not much to say. Maybe no one really knows what to say, or maybe no one wants to talk at all. People say it's alright if you don't talk about anything sometimes, but what if that happens on a regular base? Can that really be healthy?

Though, both are probably glad anyway to be there and accompany the other.

"What are you thinking about, Satsuki?" Nui asks.

"... about Ryuko, I suppose."

"Again."

"I know. I shouldn't. I should try to think of something else."

"You need a break. It's fine to think of her. I do it too. Don't do it too much though."

That's unhealthy. I know what I am talking about.

Rely too much on something - and it'll kill you eventually.

Do you want to die?"

"No. I understand what you mean."

"Think of her all you want. But do it when you're over her." Nui mentions and moves her hand slowly across the couch, then down to the pillow next to her.

"You're right. It'll devour me. It's not easy, that's all."

"I bet so. You should go to sleep, Satsuki. You seem very tired, and tired people tend to have negative thoughts."

"Yeah. I wanted to go sleep in a bit anyway. I've heard there's going to be a fun festival tomorrow in Kisarazu.

They've got popcorn there. Lots of popcorn." Satsuki chuckles. Nui looks up, actually being interested.

"Oh. Do they?"

"Some of the best there is."

"That's a lie. But I'll take you up on it anyway."

Satsuki smiles.

"Great. Well... in that case, we shall conquer the candy booths." she says excited and stands up, patting Nui's hair and then entering Ryuko's old sleeping room.

"I'll go to sleep then. You should as well. Have a good night, Nui."

"Yes. You too, Satsuki." she answers and watches the door closing. Satsuki's younger sister stays in the room, while Satsuki lays down on the bed. When doing so, she observes the weather outside, and the sky. The bed is comfortable and warm.

There is also a little photo of Mako and Ryuko on the little table next to her. Why Nui kept the photo here is something she doesn't understand. Though, maybe Nui has gotten resistant towards such a sentimentality, unlike Satsuki, who's feeling guilt for her failure.

"... wish you could join us too, Ryuko." she thinks while looking at Ryuko's happy face while having her arm around Mako's neck. Mako's doing a peace hand sign. The young woman lowers her head, sinking it into the soft pillow and closing her eyes. Minutes and

minutes pass, and only as Satsuki hides herself under the blanket entirely, it seems as if peace and silence took their turn on Satsuki.

And as the silence in the Matoi mansion slowly spreads across all the rooms, Nui's moment has come. She stands up and walks to the door to the room where Satsuki sleeps in. There are no more sounds coming out of it anymore. The instable sister looks at a clock in the room, of which she imagines the usual "Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock" as she watches it.

"Hrmpf. Finally."

Nui therefore turns her back to the door and puts on her normal clothes again. Done with that, she walks back into the hallway which is connected with the basement. Slowly, she descends down into the basement, with everything becoming colder and darker, and when she arrives at the end of these stairs, she unlocks and opens the door, entering it without turning on the light. Only when that door is closed, and darkness is everywhere, only then she turns on the lights.

Sounds of the lights going on can be heard, and a white room, of which it's walls have been damaged, can be seen. Desks with tools, shelves with clothes, and written papers are everywhere. Sketches of puppets, a destroyed mirror with blood stains, Isshin's old desk, imbued into the basement, scissors, strings.

One of those desks has a bunch of tools to treat cloths with, such as needles, scissors, a stitching machine. Strangely enough, life fibers, given by Hinata. Life fibers that had no connection to the Layer, and thus, never dissolved.

There's also blood on them.

Nui takes a few steps forward and grabs the life fibers. They seem to be inanimated - without energy, it wouldn't take long until they are useless. But Nui knows a way to give them life. The woman opens a shelf and grabs a few tools with which she can drain blood from a

body, such as a few syringes. She raises her sleeve - little wounds are on it. She hasn't cut herself, but considering the entire area plus these marks on her arm - and who knows what else she did to herself - it's no surprise she doesn't want anyone to find out what is going on here.

Carefully, she injects a syringe and drains her blood out of her body. The process is uncomfortable to watch, but Nui doesn't mind, and once she is done, she treats the little wound carefully and infuses the life fibers with the blood, who gain strength and shine up in a nice red tone. They try to slowly move towards Nui, but she holds them with her hand. Then, she turns to the large table in the middle of the room. There is a blanket on it, and below, it seems to be a person, who's hand is bloody.

Nui throws the blanket aside.

Under it, Ryuko's corpse. Her torso, torn into two, regenerates extremely slowly.

One might wonder now why she is doing this. One might say why this could be entirely against the ideas Nui gives Satsuki - that she should accept things as they are, that Ryuko can't come back and that she needs to live her own life now. One could even say she is a hypocrite, and perhaps one would be right about that.

On the other hand, maybe this is also Nui's way to help Satsuki. Satsuki doesn't have to think about this. Nui can do that for her. Another sign of her conflicted mindset, which on one side still cannot forgive either of her family members, and the other side, which displays a caring, if crazy sister.

But maybe there is also the distant wish of having a family - one that doesn't die of unfortunate circumstances, war or sicknesses. A wish of having a family she could grow old with and hopefully die as a healed person.

She must be doing this for years now. It's inevitable that this plays with her mind even more. Who can sustain the gaze of their dead sibling for years, and every night.

It's sick by all means. But it's not like she's not used to be called like that. And if anything: perhaps Satsuki does eventually learn to live on her own, so that, if Ryuko comes, and that is a very big if, she knows now not to rely her entire life on her. After all, Satsuki has experienced what happens if she does.

Nui carefully connects the new life fibers with Ryuko's open body, who's wounds have been regenerated to a large extend. It'll take a few weeks, perhaps a few months until she is done. Only then she'll know if this "experiment" will be successful or not. Nui always keeps a few life fibers left, so that those can reproduce via her blood.

After 30 minutes, she is done, and leaves Ryuko under the blanket again. The sister cleans the room quickly, turns the lights off and then leaves it, locking the door.

She'll do this day and day. Tomorrow. In two days. Next week. In the following months.

Until Ryuko awakens. Or insanity conquers her.

...

...

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A few days later.

Glasses can be heard. In a corner, a few men hold a conversation. Next to a bar, a man and a woman, drinking a cold one, and across the warm and comfortable looking room a few more groups. Such is the everyday look of the bar Mikisugi and Tsumugu now own - chill, far away from battles. The man with the blue hair who's working behind it cleans glasses, his clothes, as expected, rather fond of showing skin, and behind him, between all the glasses and bottles, a few photos of his comrades from Nudist Beach. As well as an image of his deceased girlfriend, and one of Ryuko.

Tsumugu in the meantime observes the room from the balcony of the first floor above Mikisugi. Both hear the door next to the bar open, and they watch curiously as to who might come in now. After a minute, Satsuki appears, putting away her coat and then looking at Mikisugi who's nodding slightly at her. It's a gentle smile he's throwing at her, but not as usual - not in a sexual way as one might think, rather like a good friend who's glad to see an old companion again.

"Satsuki, you seem tired. Been a while, how you've been? You good?" he asks and examines her rather empty face. Satsuki sighs.

"I don't really know what to do anymore. I'm but a simple young woman with more money than anyone else on this world. I could found a new company, and then what? I might have something to be busy about, but that wouldn't be fulfilling. I won everything one could gain on this world, but I lost the one thing I cannot retrieve back, no matter the cost." she explains. Mikisugi gives her a glass of water.

"Hm..." he thinks while cleaning the bar.

"... guess you could use the money to change something. I suppose people told you this already, I don't know, but if you really have that much money, I'd use it to change something. I'd do something meaningful with it. Sure, this life fiber sickness is gone now, but there are many other things on this world that can need help. Do it like

Takarada. Even he, who's selfish and uppish knows that money isn't everything, even though he always appears like that. He spent a good bunch of his money with repairing Ôsaka again, and even modernize it. Reparations are still going, you can't get such a city back to it's full glory in two years again, but the thought counts already."

Satsuki circles with her finger on the bar.

"I wish Ryuko would still be here." she says and looks up to Mikisugi. He nods a bit.

"Yeah, I know. But even if she would be here, it wouldn't change the problem you are facing. Maybe you should do some sort of journey. Take a look at the people you've met, visit continents, perhaps see Japan for yourself as a free person. There is nothing that will restrain you anymore, no clothes, no aliens, no Ragyo. The end of one journey is always the start of a new one. It might inspire you.

In any case, you gotta try to leave Ryuko behind you. I doubt she would want you to mourn for her every day. Give you and your other sister the chance to live life. None of us really were able to live - we lived to fight, and now we try to live to enjoy life, see what it's about. See it in it's full, naked glory, so to speak."

"Mhm."

Mikisugi watches Satsuki. She may not say much but he notices that his words get past her defense - maybe thanks to him being older, she rather listens to him than others. He knows more about life than she does. Maybe a journey really is the right thing to do. Something that brings her on different thoughts.

"Hey, uh, this... so, you guys were captured in Tokyo years ago, right? And you had to walk all the way back to us?"

"Indeed."

"Would it sound overly crazy if I'd suggest to do this exact journey again, but with less evil corporate soldiers and psychos that hunt you down?"

"Wouldn't that bring me back on thinking about Ryuko?"

"You do it already anyway. But you could take it as a farewell. Despite the things that happened there, and yes, I know, some things really have gotten ugly - but you guys had fun too, didn't you? Relive this journey once more, visit the locations you've seen, and maybe more. Face that past and leave it all behind you. Then you will be able to see the world with different eyes.

And if you then want to change it like your mother tried to, you will succeed in doing so, because you know now what to do.

... besides, Arata's got his strip club back and I've heard you liked it."

"I will not comment on this." she says and sinks her head into her suit and scarf, trying to hide the little blush on her face.

"On a serious note though, Mikisugi, I can imagine this idea to work." she answers, slightly relieved.

"Good. You should take photos like the young Mankanshoku. Heard she's a photographer. Maybe she's got something for you, or you buy your own camera. Not like you are poor. Photos may not give back the feelings you had back then, but they can be a mirror for the past. Could be a good way to keep things in mind while also accepting them how they are.

"... yeah. You are right. Thanks, Aikuro..."

Mikisugi smiles and looks up to Tsumugu who's smoking a cigar. He's looking down to him and nods.

"So, are you planning to stay with us here for a bit? Weather's pretty bad, and we've got good music."

"I suppose I could stay here for a little longer. This rain is really ruining the last weeks. Meh."

"Mhm, I know, I am not a big fan of it either. It's to puke, but some people seem to like it."

"Heh... yes."

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Additional weeks pass. The weather has stabilized and soon, winter will arrive. Whatever is left of the life fibers is being thrown away, and large companies that once relied on them break apart. The world is going back to partially natural and industrial ways to gain its resources. Taking down the life fibers for good has brought good and bad things. It changed the world forever.

Humans sleep better now. What plagued them is gone now, and except for very very few exceptions, there are none left in this universe. They will not come back. Nothing can do that. The life fibers are but a memory now - little cells that fly around somewhere in a different layer, different dimension, one that cannot be reached. Just like Ryuko and her parents do.

What should feel liberating for Satsuki is not liberating at all. And even if her friends and companions say to let go: it's not as easy as people say. Of course, what Mikisugi, Sanageyama and the others say might be true, but is it that easy to drop things as they are or were? And what would happen should Nui succeed in bringing Ryuko back? Would that be the final solution? Or would that end all efforts of bringing Satsuki into a state of mind that accepts that she is one of many people on this world now, free to live as she wants to.

It might be this freedom that plays with her.

Well, perhaps there is no good answer to all these questions. It's a complex problem for a complex person. There could always be something that will keep Satsuki up.

But she tries. The more time she spends for herself, the more she attempts to accept the thoughts that fly through her mind. No war leaves things unharmed. There is always something you are reminded of. Be it a scar, an event, or the death of someone close to you.

Often, Satsuki sits in her room on the white seat, looking at the ocean, not knowing what to do.

Though, there might be a man left who learned disciplin. It might be a good idea to seek up Gamagoori...

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A car door closes. The weather today is cloudy, in the distance, the first snow falls, and the trees have lost their leaves already. There is a path in front of Satsuki that leads to a comfortable and big estate, with harvesting fields on the left and right, as well as a tree farm to gather apples when the tim ecomes. A little river is close to said estate. Near to that estate, she can see Gamagoori leaving a little warehouse, carrying wood for the chimney. When he sees Satsuki, he smiles satisfied and puts down the wood to greet her.

"Satsuki!"

"Hello, Ira."

"What honour have I deserved to be visited by you? How have you been?"

"It's been alright. And you?"

"Well. The last days I've been working in the yard, my parents are currently away, they will come back later today however. Until then, I

wanted to make sure we got enough wood for the cold days."

"I see you've been diligent."

"I always try to be."

"True that."

"Would you like something to drink?"

"I'm good, I am here just for a moment. Your home is close to the route to Tokyo after all."

"Heh, fine. You won't mind me working then?"

"Not at all."

"Good. Then follow me and we can talk." he says and picks up the firewood which he carries to a hut close to the main building.

"So what is it that leads you here exactly?"

"Advice, to be honest."

"Advice? From me? Haven't you been the one who taught me?" he asks curious.

"I did, but now I lack such advice for myself. I've been speaking with friends over years. I believe I lost all the resolve that was left in me. You see, ever since Ryuko is gone, there was this last attempt to avenge her, and I did so, but after that... there was nothing. Mikisugi suggested I should embark on a little journey, and while I do like the idea, I cannot help myself but think it will not change anything."

"What makes you think that?" he asks and opens the hut, putting the firewood away.

"Well, as I said: Ryuko. And REVOCS. It's a complex problem and I am looking for simple solutions. But the world isn't that simple. Life

isn't either. But I never had these situations until now - it was always about my mom, and now that she, and everything with her, is fully gone, there is nothing left for me."

"Hrmpf." he grumbles.

"I know what you are thinking. "How can she rely so much on a dead family member, and a company that more or less killed her?"

"No. I am wondering how you couldn't get over this."

Satsuki doesn't give an answer.

"Please, Satsuki, don't understand this the wrong way, but I don't know you as a woman that drowns in her own tears and emotions. Your sister is dead, REVOCS is gone, all that is left now is your own life. I assume everyone told you that however.

This however not: I don't like you are behaving like this. You seek help from others on a situation we cannot actively participate in. What should we do to change your feelings? What should I do? We can only talk with you, but in the end, we are all alone and responsible for ourselves. I remember the days when I helped the youngsters when they were attacked by people with ill intentions - and ended up killing people. I regret the latter till today. But it does not consume me, as it is something that happened in the past. All I can do is learn out of it. And I tried to learn. I still do.

Yes, Ryuko is dead, and there is nothing you can fight against anymore. Do you want to spend your entire life fighting though?"

Satsuki seems dejected by these words, though he might be right. Gamagoori raises an axe and starts cutting wood.

"Alternatively you do drown in your emotions. But you are not the kind of woman that would do that. You have a reason to live and this reason enables you to stay here now - otherwise you'd be long gone. I do not know what thrives you to continue, but you'll have to find out

and live for that. I for one have achieved all the ambitions I wanted to success in, and maybe in the future there will be more for me. But I live for a reason. And so do you.

Whether it's protecting the sister that is left, or having more money than any other person on this world, hedonism, you name it. There is something that keeps you here. You'll have to drill yourself to find out what it is, and leave your deceased sister behind. Life is too short to mourn for everything. We can and should regret, but we should also move on."

Satsuki nods.

"I suppose so."

She looks at the valley far away from the estate. Snow is falling.

"All of this remembers me subtly of this one day where I could not take up on you and got defeated. But instead of me, kneeling on the ground and drowning in my misfortune, it is you now that kneels there.

So I am telling you: get yourself together. Your sister is not the end. The end has come when you did your last heartbeat, and that last heartbeat will seek you up many years from now on - and you will look back at a life that was worth fighting for. All the fighting there was is over now. Now it's to enjoy the reward. Or drown in vain.

It's up to you, Satsuki. But don't you dare succumbing to your pain - it's the pain that made us stronger."

"Yeah... you're right. I... have to get myself together. Something still keeps me here, and I will find out what it is. I am acting more disrespectful than I thought I would. I don't care for anything unless it's my family.

I need to stop. I need to accept it happened. But I must not mourn. I am not alone - there is my other sister, and there are friends like you.

This idea Mikisugi had is good. This way I can face what is left of the past. And leave it as it is. And when I come home, I will be certain there is a good life waiting for me." she explains to herself. Gamagoori nods satisfied.

"Thank you." she smiles grateful.

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Additional weeks pass.

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The cut of a scissor can be heard. And briefly after, life fibers pull themselves together. Nui looks down at Ryuko. A clock ticks in the background.

An immensely large scar goes through Ryuko's body. Her black arms have regenerated, hidden by skin. She seems normal. What is left now is a thread of fate, which Nui grabs from the desk, injecting her own blood into it. Carefully, Nui takes a look at Ryuko's head. Gently, she puts said thread of fate, which is now powered with energy, into her sisters head, and warmth fills it.

At least like this, well partially, she awoken her puppets back then. Is it possible this will happen with Ryuko too now? Nui waits and watches, minute for minute, but there is no movement from Ryuko. No heartbeat. There is nothing but loneliness.

Nui stands in that position for the next two hours, doesn't move a muscle, she just waits for an reaction, but even then: nothing happens.

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It's gotten quiet in the Matoi mansion.

"Hm." she mumbles disappointed.

Nui covers Ryuko with the blanket again and walks up the stairs, slow and heavy, turning off the lights. Is there no other way to get her equally beloved and behated sister back?

Obviously not.

Nui stands at the top of the stairs for five minutes, and there is no one who is nearly as clever as Nui when it comes to reviving people, or giving life to them at all. Not even Iori could do that. And he has his hands full of own things to accomplish.

Nui closes the door and walks back into the living room.

Up in the living room, she walks to the window, throwing her gaze at the garden. Her face is mirrored in the window. She seems cold, calm, so much that it's not natural anymore. Briefly after, she looks into her own eyes.

It's this very spot where she stands like this for thirty long minutes, until it's 1 AM midnight. Silence has conquered the land, and her mansion.

Silence that will never be broken.

In that moment, Nui yells aggressively and destroys a glass table with her fist, shards fly around, her hand sustains wounds.

"FUUUUUUUUUUUUUUCK!"

All the shards on the ground look at her. She can see herself in all of them. Some blood leaves her hand. Nui falls back on the ground, shaking her head, shaken by her failure. In life fiber language, she speaks around quiet, talking only to herself.

Well, what was the purpose of all of this now, if she failed nonetheless? Perhaps her attempt was determined to fail from the very beginning. At first, the life fibers she got from Hinata were supposed to be used to make something special with Senketsu. Now she knows everything was for nothing. She can take lives, but she cannot give one. It's unfair.

All of this is tiring. Soon enough, she's in the bathroom, taking a shower, brushing her teeth, and lastly, going back into the living room to watch what boring things happen on TV now. She just wants to be distracted.

Should she tell Satsuki what happened? Or should she visit the grave next to Isshin, where Ryuko is supposed to lie under?

Now she's all calm and cold, now there is this strange, nearly apathic attitude, with cool hands, relaxed body stance, and empty eyes.

As the clock strikes 2 AM, Nui believes the time has come to go to sleep. She doesn't have any work or any responsibilities, everything is done by Satsuki already. There is absolutely nothing to do for her. The woman turns off all the lights and walks to her sleeping room, but as she opens the door, she can hear something fall down in the basement, and instantly, Nui turns around. The door down there opens - has she forgotten to lock it up?

"Who's there?" she's yelling. No answer though, except for stuttering, and unhealthy sounds. Nui carefully, but not anxious, approaches the hall, but she cannot see what is going on. When she enters the hallway, she looks down to the basement - the door is open, as expected.

Something touches her foot all of a sudden, and a sad, helpless voice can be heard.

"... Nui..."

But she knows that voice and turns on the light.

In front of her, her sister Ryuko, half dead, breathing hardly and with a loss of orientation, and she is looking for a hold. She can barely walk.

This gaze shocks Nui, and she carefully looks down at Ryuko, turning her sister around and looking into her face.

All she can see is the same face expression like she had back then. Lost in a world she thought she couldn't visit anymore. The language in her face and eyes is clear - and it's to pity about. Nui touches Ryuko's cheek gently. And for a moment, Nui's own face expression changes.

To a slight smile of comfort.

"... long time no see, mon cher." she smiles tender. Carefully, Nui helps Ryuko up, who's stumbling, naked, and in need of clothes, and a fresh bath.

All of this in given time. For the moment, both just appreciate each other.

"... but why... did you..."

"You didn't thought you could get away from me by dying, did you?"

"... oh fuck off."

"You better not die again."

"I'll... give my best."

"I know."

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The following weeks go on calm and quiet. One might think Ryuko is back, jumping around happily and appreciating her return. But she doesn't. Instead, Ryuko feels healed. As if all the battles of her past have been accepted as what they are now: memories. Memories of a time before this life. Nui made it her task to treat Ryuko. Until Ryuko is well enough, Satsuki must not know about Ryuko - she is on a good path, and if she'd see Ryuko now, all the efforts done by Nui and all the advice given by the others would have been for nothing. During November and the start of December, Nui cares for Ryuko, cooks soups, helps her get used to walking and performing physical activities, and every once in a while, they both talk to each other, if not too much.

Satsuki notices during these times that Nui has changed a slight little bit. Perhaps it's both because of Satsuki trying to find her way back into life, and Ryuko being back and alive. Luckily, the first floor of the mansion has a lot to offer for Ryuko to get creative and spend her time well until she is fit enough to walk outside again.

Whenever Satsuki visits Nui, Ryuko listens upstairs, hearing how Satsuki is doing.

"I think I'm slowly accepting it." is what she can hear. Or similar words, every week. And every time she hears them, Ryuko gently leans her head on the wall, having a slight smile. Satsuki is disconnecting from Ryuko in a way that she can live her own life. Sometimes, Ryuko loses a little chuckle from her mouth when Satsuki tells a bad joke.

"Wonder how she'll feel when she sees me..." Ryuko mumbles quietly and looks around. She's in the museum-like room Nui discovered years ago. Behind Ryuko are a ton of books. She must have read most of them.

Two weeks before Christmas, Nui goes back into said room, visiting Ryuko who's examining all the things her father possessed. Not just the notebook. Clothes, a ring, and more. Nui stands next to the door and observes Ryuko.

"Dad told me about all these things in this room. See the little showcase? That's his ring when he married mom."

Nui doesn't answer.

"This dark realm was, in it's own way, a nice home, you know?" she says and turns to Nui. Nui nods and answers.

"Hundreds of years ago, you could travel wherever you want in there, see everyone's memories. I never saw my own."

"I did."

"What do you think?"

"I think that these days are over."

"But not the scars. Those will stay. Look at you."

"Yeah, maybe. But seeing how mom and dad spent their life... they both were obsessed with this life fiber shit. Then again, I guess without them we three wouldn't exist, right?"

"I suppose so."

"I'm glad I got two sisters."

"Me too."

Ryuko notices Nui is holding something under her arm.

"What's that?"

Nui puts clothes on a desk next to her. Ryuko comes closer. That's her old jacket. All of her old clothes.

"People say you grow out of clothes, but you can still hang on them like memories. I figured if you want to visit your strange friend Mako, you should visit her the proper way." Nui responds.

"Alternatively I'll tailor something for you, but you'll have to wear it no matter what it is." she continues.

"I think I'm good. But... since you mention it..."

"Yes?"

"... all this time since you brought me back, I've been wondering.

Where's Senketsu?"

"Dead."

"... yeah. I thought so." Ryuko answers accepting.

"Are you sad?" she asks.

"No. It's okay. I just wish I could have said good bye. Like last time."

Nui nods. Something is on her mind.

"I see." she answers.

"Mhm. Well. Where are we heading? Where's Mako living?"

"Fuji Hakone Izu. Satsuki told her it's a nice place there." Nui answers. Ryuko seems impressed.

"And when do we tell Satsuki I'm here too?"

"Up to you. Satsuki's probably alright now. Said she wants to travel across Japan one more time, just like years ago."

"Pfft, alright. Hope they still have that park near Ôsaka. Remember that? With the booths and all? Would be fun to go over there one more time."

Nui nods.

"Yeah. It would be. Now get yourself ready and pack your stuff."

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While Nui and Ryuko drive on the highway, Ryuko looks around to see Japan. It's not too long until they reach the little town Mako and the others live at. It's close to the one where they've seen Hakodate before.

"Damn. So nature has been taking over more of the country again ever since?" she asks.

"Yup."

The lands, destroyed by the life fibers, are cultivated anew, and nature comes back, coloring the country green again. Snow can be seen here and there, and on a cliff, they can see the large lake they saw a while ago. Ryuko opens the window and breathes in the fresh air.

It feels good.

And it feels right.

She enjoys this fresh air, and the calmness that goes with it, now that everything is over. Half an hour later, Nui and Ryuko arrive in the town where Mako resides. It's a simple city without anything too special. A few restaurants, cinemas, a theatre and so on.

Nui and Ryuko hold the car near the street that leads to the lake. Nui is aware of Mako's position - she's at the lake at the moment, taking shots with her camera. The others don't know who they will meet soon. The only certain thing is that they'll be pleasantly surprised.

"We've arrived, darling."

"And you are sure you don't want to stay here for a while? Maybe you'll like it."

"No." she answers and looks away from Ryuko.

"I can't handle this. All this kindness."

Ryuko nods and hesitates for a moment.

"I... guess you really can't. That's okay." she answers and opens the door with Nui.

"I'll be here again in five days around this time. Then we'll visit Satsuki." Nui explains.

"Sounds good." she answers and looks at Nui, relatively apathic, just waiting for Ryuko to say something or take a move. Well, Ryuko closes the door and puts a bag onto her back, then makes her way down, but as she is about to approach the street, she turns around.

"I know why you feel the way you do. Nothing can change what we all lost. All three of us didn't had a childhood. I just guess... some of us had it worse than the others. You're maybe the biggest asshole I've ever met in my entire life, but it's good to have you anyway.

You can be angry at me if you want to. But the thing with your arms... that Ragyo shit... and all the plans I've destroyed... that is over now. And... I know how it's like to be you now. I was in your memories, after all.

You were right about one thing: we both really aren't as different as I once thought. We both f'd each other up really hard. Maybe we should leave it at that. But that's just me. Whenever something is up, I'll be there for you. I know you'd be there for me too, after all.

"I'm glad you're here." she says thankful. Nui nods and sighs. Inside, she is glad to hear this though.

"See you in five days then, lil sis." Ryuko says and turns back to the road, walking down the street to Mako.

"Alright, big sis." she mumbles to herself and watches Ryuko as she walks to Mako. Two minutes later, in the distance, she can see Mako turning around. A shocked face expression appears in her face, and moments after, happiness conquers her. Mako runs towards Ryuko, jumps at her and hugs Ryuko, and both start laughing.

This area looks a little bit like the one Ryuko saw in her dream, when this journey took it's start. Do you remember?

Birds are chirping. And the sun shines...

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The next days, Satsuki and Nui decide on which stations their journey should take - and it remembers heavily of the one they took years ago already. From Tokyo to Ôsaka. And after that? Who knows. It's across Japan once more, liberated from evil, and with calm hearts - knowing everyone's past is accepted as such. Nui notices how well Satsuki seems to feel with the thought of doing this sightseeing tour.

The route, ultimately, does not matter though. All that matters is being together.

And days later, Nui picks up Ryuko again from the Mankanshoku family, who try to defend her. They wouldn't want her to leave. Their gazes when they found out that Ryuko has to go again spoke more words than a text could ever summarize. Ryuko does hesitate to step into the car, but in the end, she gives up and enters it. She can always go back. But for now, Satsuki is more important.

During this, Ryuko did find out though that this jackass like attitude cannot be performed as much as usual. The wounds she had created this scar on her body, a scar that makes it harder for her to perform challenging physical actions. And she is reminded of that everytime she sees it on her body, starting from the hips up to her shoulder.

Still, this will not destroy Ryuko's mood. She looks at Nui who's cold and calm as usual.

"Hey. You good, Nui?"

"Mhm."

"Mako and the others didn't want me to leave anymore, haha."

"How did they react?"

"They were all surprised of course. All of them wanted to know how you did it, and then they asked me how it was to be not here anymore..."

"Hm. And did you respond to that?"

"... I didn't. I only said I'm glad I'm here."

Nui nods.

"I see. Other than that?"

"Other than that they told me everything there is to know. Life fiber sickness is gone, you killed the Doppelgänger, the others are doing fine, Europe is liberated... so yeah. Now to shine up Satsuki's day, huh?"

"Yup. She doesn't know a thing."

"Alright then. You think she'll be angry at me?"

"At first, yeah, most likely. Then on second thought, she's going to be angry at me, and then she will be happy."

"Then let's do this..."

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Snow falls. Nui and Ryuko arrive at Satsuki's house. The lights are on, and Satsuki doesn't know Nui would come back. Both sisters leave the car and walk up the path to the front door.

"... I hope she can take it." Ryuko mumbles worried.

"She will."

Ryuko nods, breathes in and out and walks up the stairs to the entrance door. Nui stays in the dark and watches for a moment. Ryuko forms her hand to a strong fist.

And then she knocks at the door.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Steps can be heard. Ryuko looks back at Nui one more time, who looks at her, giving a trustful gaze. She can do this. The door opens and Satsuki appears.

Then she sees Ryuko.

"... hey... sis." Ryuko says dejected.

Satsuki looks at Ryuko, musters her... it must be a dream is what she thinks - but it's not.

"... is... it you?"

"... I'm sorry, Satsuki. I couldn't... let it happen to you."

Satsuki touches the scarf on Ryuko's neck and notices the scar on her shoulder. This really is Ryuko. Eventually, Satsuki falls into Ryuko's arms and starts crying. Ryuko pats Satsuki's hair carefully and comforts her, while Nui continues to stay in the dark, watching the snow fall.

"... don't you ever do this again, you hear me?!" she cries.

"O-okay..."

Satsuki tries to take a deep breath, and after a moment, she invites both sisters into her house, where it's comfortable and warm. Nui stands at a wall while Ryuko and Satsuki sit down onto chairs. The big sister sighs.

"... I... I don't understand, how... is this possible, I..." she mumbles.

"It's all on Nui. She couldn't bear the thought of me being dead either. So she tried to bring me back. I'm here for a few months now. But we never told you because we thought you should learn to live for yourself, and not for me. I know... not the most honest action... and you have every right to be angry at me... but she was right somewhere."

"I... yes, but..."

"There's no but. Let's... calm down for a moment. I'm okay though."

"... alright..."

"... say, you wanted to travel again, hm?"

"... mhm."

"You're cool with me joining?"

"... o-of course."

"Ehehe. Good.

Silence.

Uhm, that strip club, is that... is that still a thing?"

Satsuki looks up at Ryuko with big eyes.

"Are you serious?"

"... sorry, I just... tried to cheer you up."

"Yes of course it's still a thing and as a punishment for your behaviour I'll make sure you're going to suffer there! You'll sit there every hour until all men and all women have disappeared, and only then I allow you to eat and sleep, is that clear enough!?" she yells jokingly.

"Haha, alright, alright, I guess that's a deal then. Though, on a serious note now: if you wanna talk with me, we can do that later. And Satsuki?"

"Yes?"

"Please do yourself that favor... and don't look for me every time you can. It's not meant with bad intent. I am grateful to have you, and even more that you take care of me... but we all are free.

"... yeah. I know."

Ryuko's tummy grumbles.

"... man, I'm hungry, you got some food here?"

"I do. I will..."

"We."

"... we'll make something good together. I got fish for you, Nui."

"Perfect." Nui answers.

"Well, I'll take a look at your fridge then!" Ryuko says and stands up.

"I'll bring mattresses then." Satsuki continues and Nui helps her out...

Later this evening, Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui have made themselves ready for bed, though Nui stands at the window wall, watching the ocean herself now, while Ryuko and Satsuki are a few meters away from her on a mattress in the living room, talking with each other a bit. The lights are dimmed and outside, the wind can be heard. Snow still falls.

"Ryuko?"

"Yes?"

"I rather not ask, but I need to know... was mother and father there?"

Ryuko first only looks at Satsuki and wonders whether she should answer or not. Satsuki thinks she may have gone too far.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to ask. I was just..."

"Nah, it's okay, Sats. I don't know if it's something you really should know though, you know?"

"What do you mean?"

"I've seen both sides now. And honestly... I'm glad I still have a chance left to be here."

"I'm glad too."

"Mhm... but... yeah. Mom and dad were there too. And me."

Satsuki nods slowly.

"What was it like?"

"... they were there for each other. They couldn't do much. But when I arrived, moments later, mom and dad just sat there on the ground. Both looked into a room full of darkness. But it didn't matter to them. Neither did it matter to me. All we did was sat there and watch. It was nice. It... was nice to see them as what they once used to be, you know? And what they should have been to us.

At least I know now that there were times where mom wasn't a monster, and dad a caring father."

Satsuki smiles.

"Good... that's good."

Ryuko looks at Nui then.

"How's she doing?"

"Therapists said her trauma has burned into her head so much that it marked her till the end of life. Nui told me this condition, where her perception is altered into days of rain cannot be healed. It's too unusual. Too strange. See all the snow outside?

That's both rain and snow for her. From a natural perspective, impossible. But in her head, it works. I asked her to seek up therapists for this, and she did it. She doesn't see any mistakes in her personality, but she knows this condition is not normal. I suppose we'll have to take care of her and make sure she doesn't do anything stupid.

People like her are still dangerous. Don't forget... maybe, as you said, she is just a little girl in the body of an adult. But a psycho nonetheless. And if she wants something, she will try everything to get it."

"Right... yeah... I understand."

"I believe though it might be good to be here for her. She'll be grateful. Maybe I'll see her smile sometime then. It's so rare she does it. Strange, isn't it? I used to hate that smile, it always told me that Ragyo won. Now I'd wish I could see it again. Her heart's broken. All the solace she can find is in her head now - contradicting, as it's the head that inhabits all the problems. Still though - we'll be good sisters, right?"

"Yeah."

"... I'm glad to see you here. I promise you, I've learned."

"I believe you."

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Two days later.

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Two cars arrive at the Matoi mansion. One of them belongs to Nui. The other one?

Doors open, and Nui leaves it. She unlocks the door to the mansion and turns her back to the other car.

It's her friend Iori, who leaves his car. He's carrying a suitcase.

"You really want to try this out, yes?"

"We'll do it. It will work."

"Okay. I'll believe you." he answers and watches Nui open the door. Nui enters the hallway and walks down the stairs to the basement.

"There aren't many life fibers left but I think enough to make something good out of it."

"How did you produce them all anyway? I thought they can only generate when there is a primordial life fiber with nexus fibers, threads and more?"

"My dear, you talk with someone who technically still is life fiber. I know best what we are made of."

"True." he answers and walks down the stairs with Nui and enters the basement.

"So this is the basement where Dr. Matoi worked on his experiments and the scissor blades?"

"Mhm."

"Pretty huge. Wish I would have had such a big laboratory back then."

"You alone wouldn't know how to fill it. After this, I'll bury it for good. Unless Ryuko insists otherwise - but I'm the owner now, not her. I got the contracts and all."

"I see. Well I suppose it's an honour for me to work here, and hopefully for the last time on life fibers. I'd rather stick to suits and all. Satsuki told me you were planning on opening a store?"

"Yup."

"She asked if I would be interested too."

"And you said yes of course."

"I'm still considering it."

Nui turns her head to Iori.

"You'd rather work on everyday fashion no one cares for? Or do you want to produce clothes that have a meaning? Don't you want to do something better? Something higher?"

"... well..."

"I guess I cannot force you. But you should do it. You'll learn something from me."

"Ahaha."

"Hehe."

Iori puts the suitcase onto the desk and opens it.

"What do you think?"

"Cut into thousands of pieces... and I thought I'd be a sadist..." she smiles. Then she grabs some of the content and holds it up.

Black stripes. Red stripes. An eye made out of cloths.

"He said he'd sometimes wish he would have a body as well. He'll be perfect. Better than anything I ever created."

...

Another day passes. Tomorrow, Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui will go on another journey. And this time, they'll be the ones to set the rules.

All of them lost something through this journey that now reaches its end, but at the same time, they've gained something out of it.

Ryuko only realized in the moment where her revenge was fulfilled, that all the insanity and mayhem she brought with harmed her more than helped - it didn't feel right anymore. She wanted to kill. But if she would have managed it, would have she been better than Nui then?

Sister or not - she would have had to kill a living being that was human, more or less. What if she would have behaved different from the very start? Would have the Entity Ragyo existed then? Or the Doppelgänger?

A lot of sorrow could have been avoided... by simply not responding to violence with violence. Though, on the other hand, violence would have been a justified answer. Right or wrong is in that case not to determine.

Taking a life however is not an easy decision. Ryuko knows this now. And is all the more glad that, despite all the harm she received and caused, she is here now, having her two sisters.

Satsuki spent her life fighting life fibers. And even though she never wanted to be like her mother, she became like her. In her behaviour as ruthless dictator of an academy that answered with violence whenever someone resisted in the slightest... and also on a subtle layer - she submitted to life fibers to defeat life fibers.

In the end, Ragyo has been defeated. There's no doubt that Ragyo deserved everything. If not, this world would not exist anymore. She must have been stopped. And what she did to Satsuki, both physical and psychological, cannot be excused.

Satsuki may have forgiven her mother's evil deeds, but she will never forget what she did to her and her sisters. All of this led to Satsuki becoming a cold, heartless person - just like Ragyo. Her club presidents, her students, her allies and even the elite four were nothing but tools for her cause. And when Ryuko appeared as the sister she was, her life changed - devoted to protecting her sister, because Ragyo took her away from her.

Whether Satsuki has learned to live her own life or not will be revealed in the next decades, but after the two years where she lived without her, free from battle and war, she learned at the very least that she can't be there for everyone. And that she has to live for herself now.

At least it's a start to leave Ragyo behind. But if she can leave Ragyo behind, then she'll be able to leave the reliance on Ryuko behind too.

Satsuki always was a strong woman.

And then there is the youngest of the trio, Nui. Once seen as Ragyo's #1 tool and most disdainful monster known to those who met her sadistic tongue, she became a valuable ally. Cold and harsh, but reliably - and if one thing was proven to her, then that giving up rewarded her with achieving the family she always longed for.

It's not easy to say if her story ends in a tragedy, and if so, how sad it does - but sure is only that there is not much left of Nui. What's left is the shell of a person that could never develop. The little bit of personality she does have is holding back, but conflicted. It seeks love and attention, it wants to care for it's family, but on the other hand, there is this dark desire to destroy. Nowadays, all you can see is a quiet observant. A bit like Hoomaru. Hoomaru always was a better mother to her than Ragyo could have been.

Despite all the terror she experienced from her family and everyone around her, she would still however protect them, and maybe their friends. It's remarkable to see - to see how a person as evil and disdainful as Nui changed into someone who you may not have to like or see as a good person. But as a person who lives, and as a person with a heart. A heart that was broken long ago.

She stopped talking as excessive as she used to, stopped hurting people to compensate or to enjoy. The entire world is trash. And Nui still believes humanity can die out.

But if it would happen, she'd die out with it. In the end, her theory may was right after all - those who hurt you the most are the ones you have to love the most.

Let this be her conclusion. What's left is a little girl in the body of an adult, who's mind has been broken by it's careless, evil mother - and

yet, she still lives, hoping there is something good out there that will love her. She knows there is - her family loves her. And she loves it.

That is certain.

That... and the rain that paints the world dark. The rain that will never stop crying. Though - dark is not entirely true.

Sometimes, colors can be seen - and they can be seen whenever Ryuko and Satsuki are there. It's worth to continue.

...

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...

The dawn of the journey begins. Nui and Iori are still in the Matoi mansion. Cuts from scissors can be heard, and the concentration of two experienced tailors can be felt in the air.

This concentration is enough to bring something into this world full of life. Nui and Iori both work on the remains of this man, locked beyond clothing.

He'll be the last puppet. And the best.

Cut.

And done.

Iori takes a few steps back with Nui. There is a puppet on the desk where Ryuko was on. A naked puppet, as big as their head and therefore bigger than those Nui used to work on.

Nui observes all parts of the puppet exactly, analyzes where she can improve on - but there is nothing to improve on anymore. It's perfect. Free of flaws. Unlike the clones, who lacked physical strength.

Iori is curious.

"So what now?"

"Wait." she says satisfied and walks to the door with Iori. Both watch the puppet, and after a while, red lights leave it. And then: poof.

Iori is impressed, and Nui? Satisfied.

Satisfied with the result.

...

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...

A radio can be heard.

"What a beautiful day this is, isn't it? Weather people say today's gonna be sunny, though snow will annoy us anyway, but that shouldn't destroy our mood today, right? You know, I myself been thinking a lot about my life, wondered if I could have changed anything - I've wished things that will never happen. And that hurt me. But it's okay. The world is as it is. We humans are a pretty strange group of people, huh? Pining for something we'll never be able to achieve. At one point, it would eat us up. So instead, we decide to let go. We take all that pain upon us just to say in the end "It's okay." Next song's gonna be one of my favourites, and I do hope you listen well, you'll like it! Dear ladies and gentlemen, Alt J - Hunger Of The Pine!"

(AN: I really, really really really advice you listen to the 5 minute version of "Alt J - Hunger Of The Pine." on YouTube, either while reading or once this is over. This is the final scene - imagine this as credits music once this is over. Thanks for reading.)

Afternoon.

Both sisters drive to the Matoi mansion.

"I'm really excited for this, Satsuki. But uh..."

"Yes?"

"Does your friend Houka still offer help when it comes to applications? Doubt my old company will take me." she chuckles.

"You'd go back there?!"

"The people were decent."

"You don't look like a callcenter worker, really. But if you insist on work - have I told you about that store I'd like to open?"

"What kind of store?"

"Well..."

"... Satsuki. I swear."

"It ain't gonna be THAT bad."

"Shut it!"

"You call a clothing store better than a callcenter!?"

"You can be the cashier and take the phone calls."

"Better work for me than for others, right?"

"You better pay me well then!"

"We'll see, Miss Matoi, I need your application first. Please write it yourself, Mr. Inumuta will not be of assistance this time."

"You're a dickhead, you know?"

"I know." Satsuki grins and arrives with Ryuko at the Matoi mansion. Here, the journey to Ōsaka should begin. When both leave the car and walk towards the mansion, Nui leaves the building with a bag. Iori can be seen in the window, and his car is visible.

"So Nui, you ready to visit your favorite strip club?!" Ryuko chuckles. Nui stops in the middle of the path.

"But we'll take all the time in the world this time! Ohhh, Satsuki and me had so many good ideas on our minds, hotels are paid, even the weather is just a shitty as it used to be."

"Good." Nui answers.

But why does she stand still? Ryuko and Satsuki notice Iori in the window - he's saying something to someone in the room.

"Iori's here too?" Satsuki asks curious. She wears a white coat - Ryuko a red one.

"You've been talking of doing a journey like we used to... but someone is missing." Nui mentions.

"... and who?"

Nui looks to Iori.

"Iori?" Satsuki asks curious.

Nui shakes her head.

"We were four. Not three."

Ryuko is confused, Satsuki distrusting.

"Senketsu is dead though, Nui. Why bring this up now?"

Nui nods.

"Yes."

Suddenly, the door to the mansion opens.

"But I think you know best even memories return." Nui answers.

Both Ryuko and Satsuki look at the door and watch a young man leave the building - the colors of his jacket, trousers and shirt are the same as the ones he consisted of. Red and dark blue. His hair is neither too long nor too short, a little spiky. It reminds a bit of Ryuko's. In any case, it looks right. There are red streaks on his hair similar to Ryuko, his body light, not too muscular, but tall, he is, with 1,86 meters. His long jacket moves with the wind, and snow falls on him.

And his face looks so familiar, despite never having seen him. Despite Ryuko never seeing it. No one could have known. He has a slight smile in his face, self conscient.

Satsuki is at a loss of words. And the longer she and Ryuko stare at this man, the bigger and happier, and sinister Nui's smile becomes, first subtle, then just like in the old days.

"Been a while, Ryuko..." her old friend Senketsu says.

...

That's how this story seems to end. A story of desperation, battle, of traumas and anxiety, but also one of hope for a better future - for the individual, and for everyone else. That giving up on life cannot be an option. That even those who are evil were once normal, and that their deeds could have been avoided. In the end, this was a long journey - just as life itself is. And still, it is worth it walking on this path until this journey ends. No one knows what will expect you at the end of it.

All three sisters are together now, with their own strengths and weaknesses, plagued by evil memories and shadows of their past,

drawn with scars, their picture of the world confusing, broken, more or less. And surely, some have gone through it better than others.

But what counts is the now - what counts is that the path they travelled led to this very moment. Where all three stand together, unbroken in the end, hurt, but not defeated.

And Ryuko?

Well. She is doing what some of you are most likely doing too.

Losing tears.

But she smiled.

...

fin

Shadows Of Our Past

A KILL LA KILL STORY

Addendum

Hello! Danie here. If you came this far reading all the way through the story, thank you. Thank you so much for reading, I really really mean it! I've spent about two years working on this story, and I dare to say this is by far the very best one I've ever wrote.

This here is a simple addendum I figured I could add after the story, perhaps it might be interesting for some to know what the thought process was and all. :)

Soon, there will be a new KLK story, much shorter and I guess you could call it some sort of extra episode after the original KLK. This will probably also be the last story then.

I will split this addendum into several parts to keep it clean and organized, and I've added little titles to each thought. From here on, I will write in keywords.

1. Origin

-This story was made for two reasons: I found KLK's ending unsatisfying and wanted a continuation that explores more on what comes after (example: why are all life fibers defeated all of a sudden just because Ragyo is gone?) and the other one: I found Nui's death extremely unsatisfying and a waste. I admit I'm a huge Nui fan, (and I've been attacked for that a lot), though I found there could have been made much more with the character. I hope I achieved this with my story.

-The first time I came up with this idea was when I played, funnily enough, Modern Warfare 2019. When I've heard the track "Farah", I imagined Ryuko meeting Nui all of a sudden, but remorseful to an extent, and I was like "Hm. Maybe there could be more?"

-I needed three attempts before the final story. Those attempts were seen in the original, German version.

-The final nail in the coffin that made me write was Kill La Kill IF then. I didn't liked that story at all and I was so annoyed by that, I needed to let off steam. lol

2. General idea and the Life Fiber Sickness

-The original idea was to write a story that reflects on Ryuko's, Satsuki's and Nui's past - by that, it should also tell the reader to not give up no matter how hard life can become, as seen on these three.

-For that, I needed the life fiber sickness which would induce these reflections. By making Ryuko and Satsuki live through nightmares, they were reminded of the past, and ultimately fell back into old patterns.

-For Nui, since she was a special case considering we didn't knew anything about her (and admittedly that made sense since she was supposed to only be a bad person), I needed an entire backstory first.

-If one would have to break apart the general topics of those three, then it would be...

... for Ryuko: Desire, Hate

... for Satsuki: Protection, Family

... for Nui: Manipulation, Anxiety

-All three characters had their weakness. For Ryuko, that was Senketsu and Mako. For Satsuki, that was Ryuko herself. For Nui, that was fear of death and loneliness.

-All three characters also relied on each other. Without Ryuko, Satsuki would have gone insane with Nui. Without Satsuki, Ryuko would have killed Nui before she came to the memories. Without

Nui, Ryuko would have died long ago. Kinda ironic, right? Ryuko tried to kill the one who saved her life.

3. Side characters

-The Elite Four as well as the Nudist Beach operatives in my opinion needed a little sidestory - that way I could take the pacing out of certain situations, give the reader an idea of what the others do and paint them as more than just companions. They didn't need that much context though. Sanageyama, Nonon and the others only served as a minor role.

-Sanageyama and Houka were the most fun for me to write. I found that especially Houka could have used a few more fun scenes - hence the entire stadium battle in "Desiring Purpose".

-Huge shoutout to Hoomaru. Her character deserved more development and interest, hence I wanted her to be a nature affine person who did had a heart though. I figured if Hoomaru can be redeemed, so can be Nui. But for that, I needed someone who had contact with Nui. She was essential to the story and honestly, killing her made me tear up a bit, but it was necessary. And I simply found it to be a heart breaking but sweet story to have her be something like a replacement mother that never got any love either, and therefore knew exactly how it's like to be alone.

4. Ichiro, Ragyo, Soichiro and Masaru

-Masaru was needed to display how easily people can be manipulated into doing bad things. Obviously he was a mere henchman and he wasn't as interesting as other characters, no doubt about that, I wouldn't blame you if you forgot about him: but he realized towards the end that it doesn't always have to take much to make you do bad things, just like with Ragyo and the rest. Having him reflect on his decisions and playing a major role in taking down Neo-REVOCS was the logical consequence of that then.

-Soichiro was here in this story to give Ryuko and Nui more identification. Ryuko was supposed to learn more about him, his good and bad sides, and make up her own mind. I didn't wanted him to look like a great person - hence the experiments with the other Nudist Beach agents, including Mikisugi's girlfriend. That way, Ryuko slowly learned to accept people and their flaws. Essential for what came after.

-Nui on the other hand needed Soichiro to obviously show she killed her own family members and didn't even notice it and on the other hand to know later on that whatever she did before, it happened, and as long as she can learn out of it, it's okay that it happened.

-Ragyo said it herself, but to remind: plan B's are never a bad idea, and having Ragyo as our High Entity was probably a shock for everyone. I did foreshadow it a bit though.

In one chapter, the Entity said "Clothing is the original sin."

For some reason, the Entity always wanted Ryuko and Satsuki - and at one point only Satsuki, after Ryuko and Nui gave up on their hatred.

When the old Entity spoke of eternal life, it really meant it, but never elaborated on how.

-And yeah, Ragyo was more or less the ultimate evil to many, though Nui was hated more - but both needed a backstory considering they never really got one. Sure, Ragyo got a motive, but that simply sounded like a cultist leader (she kinda was that anyway, so). Finding out how was important to me - I wanted people to learn even the most evil persons weren't always total meanies. Of course, that does not justify what they do at all, and punishment is needed, but exciting to see nonetheless.

-Ichiro. My favorite. Oh, I had FUN writing his scenes, and his dialogue. I tried to make him look unpredictable and insane. Nui was of course the template for that.

-I had a lot of ideas on what to do with Ichiro. We come to that later, but Ichiro was supposed to be responsible for a few more deaths that did not happen later on.

-In the original first script, Ichiro was not a Doppelgänger of Nui, but one of Ryuko, and he had a rather similar look!

-His scythe was a homage on the scene where Nui enhanced the scissor blade into a scythe. Guess you could say he was something like a death bringer.

-Having Ichiro was good to showcase how different both Nui and him act in their behaviour. Nui got desperate at one point while Ichiro kept his cool towards the end, showing once more that he was superior to Nui.

-He was also there to measure the strength of the characters. Ryuko couldn't take on him most of the time, and only really fight him if he was not prepared for it (like the Neo-REVOCS battle) or if he was outnumbered (main manufacture). Satsuki was only able to kill him because Ryuko got herself killed, and that gave her the strength to eliminate him. And Nui, well, with him it showed how much she changed and how much she went to protect Ryuko and Satsuki. And in the end, she did defeat him - if it wouldn't have been for Ragyo.

5. World building

-I found it important to show more of KLK's world. All we knew is that the nazis won and that it's post apocalyptic. Writing an interpretation of what is at stakes gave the story more sense and impact. If Ryuko and the others failed, this would have been the end, no doubt.

-The strip club was my favorite and a fun reference to the perverted jokes from KLK. That kind of jokes wasn't really here except for maybe one or two references, and nudity was used in a rather serious way, without trying to give fan service. If someone was naked, then definitely not for fun. Unless it was the strip club.

-The entire storyline with Ryuko, Satsuki and Nui travelling through Japan on foot was probably my favorite part to write, apart from a few individual chapters.

6. Music

-I used it whenever I was writing. Honestly, often I imagined this to be an actual season, fully animated, with music and all.

-The story probably wouldn't be the story I wanted to write if it wouldn't have been for all the music tracks.

-For those who read on wattpad: I made a playlist back then where I would collect all tracks. The total count is 249 tracks, uploaded across all the chapters.

7. Possible deaths

-That's my favorite part.

-Originally, Nonon and Mikisugi should have died too.

-Nonon was supposed to die on stage when Ichiro interrupted the concert on the Nudist Beach headquarter. She would have died instantly though, not in vain.

-Mikisugi was supposed to die the moment Nui revealed her presence to Ichiro in the same chapter. Mikisugi would have been beheaded by Ichiro.

-Masaru was supposed to survive.

8. Alternate scenes

-A different ending was planned, in which Ryuko stays dead. The last scene would have then been Satsuki and Nui visiting Ryuko's grave while it's snowing, and they both take relief from the fact that at least those two are still there. It would then end with both smiling at each

other - and a fade to black, followed by Hunger of the Pine. Yeah, Hunger of the Pine is basically the story's main theme.

-Ragyo should have originally been killed by Satsuki and not by Nui. She would have been killed on the destroyed battlefield of Tokyo, and Satsuki would give her a mercy death.

-Ichiro was supposed to be killed by Satsuki and not by Nui as well. However, I didn't want Satsuki to actually be responsible for a dead person by her own hands - perhaps that would have strengthened her in the belief she did everything right. So I'd rather take Nui who was raised to kill.

-Satsuki would have, however, ripped Ichiro apart, and he would have dissolved into thousands of parts after sighing annoyed, saying "touche."

-In the original script, Ryuko and Nui would have met far sooner already - in the train to Tokyo at the start of the story after Ryuko escaped Ichiro.

-If this would have been a movie/series, the part in Chapter 5 where Hunger of the Pine is played would have been the intro.

-You would then see a fade to black with the dark halls, and white fibers on the right. Inside those memory fibers, you'd see a specific character. First Ryuko, with fire in the background - Satsuki, with wind in the background - Nui standing in rain, first normal and smiling evil, and when a lightning occurs, for a brief moment decapitated, after that, anxious - then you'd see the Elite Four appearing - after that, Mako and Hoomaru, looking into different directions, with Mako pining for Ryuko and Hoomaru lamenting silently - and then, Ichiro, with his back turned towards the viewer and only his left eye looking at you, and in an angle his twisted smile. Followed up, in the far distance, Ragyo, looking at the viewer menacingly and planning. And lastly, a few landscapes, of which some are scattered and corrupted with life fibers as the track ends. On the left, you'd see credits and voice actors.

-The original script had the zeppelin finished at the start of the story already, and it was used as a headquarter, instead of a stationary one.

-The Neo-REVOCS battle should have continued briefly after with the headquarter battle, and if it would have been the zeppelin, then it would have been a large battle inside it, with Ichiro and his life fibers winning the battle. The duel between Nui and Ichiro would have then been in the destroyed parts of that ship as it crashed into a forest near Ōsaka.

9. Favorite parts

-My favorite chapter was 19/2 and 28/3. I wanted Ryuko to feel the consequences of her deeds, and while Ichiro's logic was twisted and sick, he did had a point, and he delivered. Thus, I thought it would be very fitting to take Ryuko's arms and legs away as a compensation for when she took Nui's arms. For 28/3, the build up to the point where Nui faces off Ragyo always gives me goosebumps, especially with the music.

-My favorite battle was either the chase on the rails in Nagoya from 9/3 or the battle between Ragyo and Nui in 28/3. It could also be the battle between Ryuko and Nui in 24.

-My favorite scene was the one in 25/2, where Ryuko and Nui finally stop their battles and just comfort each other in their sadness. That made me cry back then. Honestly though: every scene where Ryuko and Nui got along with each other was my favorite. Not gonna lie, that was a reason why I wanted to write that story, I really wanted a story with both of them understanding each other.

...

So yeah, I guess this concludes this story. Again, thank you so much for reading this. I really cannot thank you enough. I know people who consider this story canon and it's the biggest compliment I could ever get.

This was not the last time we've seen each other though, there will be one more story, and it will be heavily focused on the Ryuko/Nui relationship. It'll be good, I'm sure it will be. I wanna try to work on it this week already and at least get the prologue done, so yeah, keep an eye out, there will be something out either this or next week. :)

Until then! :D